BELMONT LODGE.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

HARRIET JONES,

OF

MAIDSTONE.

" Whoever thinks a faultleſs piece to ſee,
" Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er ſhall be.
" In ev'ry work regard the writer's end,
" Since none can compaſs more than they intend;
" And if the means be juſt, the conduct true,
" Applauſe, in ſpite of trivial faults, is due."

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages being written under the deepeſt depreſſion of mind, in order to alleviate the ſorrows of a ſuffering parent, the Authoreſs of Belmont Lodge humbly hopes ſhe ſhall not be judged by the more ſcrutinizing eye of Criticiſm, but experience from an enlightened nation that lenity, that indulgence which the tender age of nineteen may demand! benevolence being the leading feature which characterizes the firſt characters of the firſt kingdom in the world.

"Great minds, like Heav'n, are pleas'd with doing good."

ROWE'S TAMERLANE.

BRITISH MUSEUM
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BELMONT LODGE.

CHAP. I.

BELMONT LODGE is an extenſive manſion, built in the Corinthian order, and ſituated in a beautiful romantic valley, in whatever county the reader's imagination will pleaſe to fancy it, provided he places it on the banks of the river Severn.

In the diſpoſition of the grounds, Nature and Art ſeem to have vied with each other—Nature having ranged a chain of hills, in a ſemicircular form, to ſhield it from the northern blaſts; from whence the ſplendid reſidence of hoſpitality, the thatched roofed

cottage of content, or the deſerted village, depopulated by ambition, might be ſeen.

Art has exhauſted her ſtores of ingenuity to embelliſh it with a delicate profuſion of beauties, whilſt here and there a garden chair, judiciouſly placed, may offer repoſe to the weary, and ſolitude to the contemplative.

On one ſide of the houſe a wood ſpreads its generous branches to receive the feathered choir, which is ſo well inhabited, that it affords perpetual harmony! On the other ſide is a garden, adorned with the choiceſt exotics—flowers, herbs, plants, fruits, and ſhrubs. In the front of the Lodge, at the termination of a ſloping lawn, the river Severn diverſifies the enchanting ſcenery, reflecting in its pellucid boſom the varied beauties of the place; whilſt the finny brood, which ſport on its tranſparent ſurface, promiſe unbounded pleaſure to the wary angler, who, with unremitting aſſiduity, watches with eager eye the moving float, anxiouſly waiting the favourable moment, playing

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ing with exiſtence, to render death the more certain.

Behind the Lodge, an expanſive paſturage ſupplies ſix horſes, two cows, and a flock of ſheep with provender, which extends to a nurſery well ſtocked with game. A path, neatly gravelled, leads directly through theſe grounds to an adjacent village. At a little diſtance ſtands the church, built with a modeſt ſimplicity; and, adjoining, the yard, rendered gloomily ſublime by the majeſtic and venerable yew-tree, beneath whoſe ſacred ſhade lies many a mouldering form, once animated with a ſoul which, had it been cultivated by education, would have graced the moſt exalted ſituation!

Each grave is ornamented with a neat plain tomb-ſtone, by the deſire of Sir Gregory Belmont, on which is engraved an epitaph deſcriptive of their poſſeſſive, not imaginary virtues. He thought this would be the means of making them, not only honeſt, but induſtrious and virtuous members of ſociety; for there is an inherent

pride engendered in the heart of man, which too frequently lies dormant for want of a ſpark of laudable ambition to kindle it into a flame, and exerciſe thoſe virtues which act as auxiliaries.

This was the method Sir Gregory employed to excite emulation in the breaſts of his pariſhioners, which fully anſwered his purpoſe; as every individual inhabitant wiſhed to excel his neighbour, by having an epitaph, written by Sir Gregory Belmont, to proclaim to thoſe who viſited their graves--

Here lies the man, whom all who knew approv'd,
In death reſpected, as in life belov'd;
Though poor—the paths of honeſty he trod,
Till death, triumphant, guided him to God.

And ſo great an influence had emulation on their lives, that there was but one grave without a ſtone; and although the worthy Curate petitioned Sir Gregory, he would not permit one to be raiſed, ſaying, he was determined never to overlook an offence of that nature; for if a man would

ſteal

ſteal two pounds of beef to ſupport himſelf, he might expect all thoſe who had families to provide for, to be brought to the gallows; declaring, with ſome warmth, that when a Juſtice of the Peace overlooked what they might call trifling offences, he not only neglected his duty, but, as it were, encouraged greater crimes.

The compaſſionate Curate allowed the juſtice of his argument, although chagrined at being denied his requeſt, as this good man's greateſt pleaſure conſiſted in reading eulogiums in praiſe of his humble flock; flattering himſelf that his pious exhortations in the pulpit had not a little contributed to the numerous panegyrics in the church-yard, which he delighted to walk in every day after his frugal dinner, recalling to his imagination thoſe former ſcenes when his admonitions prevailed.

Some time before Sir Gregory Belmont's deceaſe, his eldeſt ſon, George Belmont, who had been a Captain in the Navy ſeveral years, was rewarded, for ſome ſignal ſervices he had done the nation, by being made an

Admiral; and no heirs appearing to claim Eliſmere Caſtle, that, with the title of Lord Summerfield, and the accumulated rents, were preſented him, with the concurrence of Parliament, who paſſed a Bill for the purpoſe of enacting, that the title and eſtates ſhould devolve to his lawful heirs, or, in caſe of failure of ſuch iſſue, to the next heir lineally deſcended.

Sir Gregory lived to ſee his ſon ennobled for his patriotic ſervices, and a handſome proviſion, ſecuring him from every poſſibility of future exigence, ſettled on him and his family, with the approbation of his Sovereign; when he was ſeized with a prevalent diſtemper, which threatened a ſpeedy and fatal termination to a life replete with every virtue.

Notice of his danger was immediately diſpatched to Lord Summerfield, who was cruizing in the Mediterranean, and to Charles Belmont, who was a graduate of the Univerſity of Oxford. Charles, on hearing the fatal meſſage delivered by Anthony, (his father's ſervant) was ſeized with the deepeſt

deepeſt ſorrow; and, taking a haſty leave of his fellow Collegians, he mounted his horſe, ordering Anthony to follow the next day with his ſervant and baggage.

He needed no other incentive than that of affection to urge him to proceed with ſpeed; for, though the diſtance was above a hundred and eighty miles, juſt as the ſecond evening was cloſing in, and twilight veiling the blue expanſe of heaven, he arrived at the door of his paternal ſeat. A gloomy ſilence reigned through the whole building, which ſeemed to preſage the near approach of death! With a trembling hand he gently pulled the hall-bell; and, after waiting ſome time in anxious expectation, the door was opened by Martha, a middle aged woman, who had lived in the family ſome years as a ſervant. He accoſted her with a faltering voice, and begged to be informed immediately whether his father was ſtill living.

"Father! father!" rejoined Mrs. Martha; "ſurely, Sir, you muſt have miſtaken Belmont Lodge for ſome other houſe? I

am certain your father does not live here;" when looking very earneſtly at him, ſhe exclaimed, "Bleſs me! it is certainly my dear young maſter! Mr. Charles, you are ſo much altered I did not know you! Alas! Sir, I little thought when laſt you left us to go to College, you would return to cloſe my dear maſter's eyes, as the ſaying is!"

"Does he ſtill live, then, Martha?" aſked the feeling Charles.

"It is as much as one can ſay, Sir. The Curate of the pariſh, and a gentleman from London (Counſellor Mordaunt I think they call him) are now with him; and my maſter has been aſking, every five minutes for this half hour, if our young maſter had come yet? meaning you, Sir; ſo, if you pleaſe, I will let him know you are here."

"Do ſo, my good Martha," replied young Mr. Belmont, "whilſt I endeavour to collect my agitated ſpirits to ſupport the awful interview."

Martha ſoon returned, and beckoned him to follow her, which he did in ſilence; for,

oppreſſed

oppreſſed, and nearly overcome by his powerful emotions, he could ſcarcely ſupport himſelf. When he entered his father's apartment, he perceived the good old man ſitting in his bed, ſupported by pillows, with a countenance ſo emaciated, yet ſo placid and reſigned, that he did not appear to have the leaſt wiſh to live, or the ſmalleſt crime, whether unintentional or deſigned, that required repentance or contrition. The worthy Curate was ſitting by his bedſide, with one hand gently retained in his, as if unwilling to part from his beſt friend; whilſt the Counſellor (a genteel young man) was buſily employed at the table in inſpecting ſome deeds of ſettlement, and adjuſting various other papers; but on hearing ſome one enter the room, he looked towards the door; when, ſtruck with the manly deportment and expreſſive countenance of Charles Belmont, which, touched with the ſhade of ſorrow, portrayed the tender feelings of his ſoul, he roſe, and offered him a chair. Mr. Belmont bowed; and, waving his hand with an expreſſive elo-

quence, proceeded to his father's bedside; when, kneeling down, he reſpectfully took his hand, and preſſing it to his lips, let fall a tear, ſacred to the memory of filial affection. The ſcene was affecting. Sir Gregory in vain twice eſſayed to ſpeak. Mr. Mordaunt's eyes gliſtened with the tear of ſympathy, whilſt the Curate, who had retired to a diſtance at the approach of Mr. Belmont, advanced, and aſſiſting him to riſe, entreated him to ſubdue his feelings, and not, by an exceſs of grief, diſturb the few remaining hours Sir Gregory had to live, which the phyſicians had juſt aſſured them were faſt drawing to a concluſion; but rather, by a compoſed behaviour, prepare him for that awful change which muſt unavoidably ſhortly take place.

This timely remonſtrance had a proper effect on the feelings of the company, and turned the courſe of their ideas into the proper channel. Sir Gregory, taking a ſealed packet from the hands of Mr. Mordaunt, and putting it into his ſon's, ſaid, "This is a deed of ſettlement, drawn by this

this gentleman, Charles," pointing to Mr. Mordaunt, "before your amiable mother's death; witneſſed by me, the Curate, your brother, and Anthony, to prevent diſſenſions; entailing this eſtate, of which ſhe was the heireſs, upon you, as her youngeſt ſon, on condition that you ſhould not take poſſeſſion of it till after my deceaſe. The reaſons which ſhe alledged for this manifeſt partiality in your favour, were, that ſhe knew her eldeſt ſon would command an ample fortune, and that ſhe wiſhed you to be placed above mediocrity; knowing how apt the world is to overlook merit, or virtue, if habited in the garb of poverty. My reaſon for keeping this affair a ſecret was not, believe me, from any ſelfiſh conſideration."—Charles tenderly preſſed his hand, but his heart was too big for utterance.—"Actuated by the pureſt motives, and tendereſt wiſhes for your welfare, I kept it a ſecret, that you might purſue your ſtudies with the ſame diligence and perſeverance as if you were to gain your livelihood by them. My end obtained, the ſecret is diſcloſed; and

you are now at liberty to purſue what plan you pleaſe, ſo it be not inconſiſtent with the limitations contained in your mother's deed of ſettlement, which poſitively declares you muſt purchaſe a Baronetage, and agree to reſide three months in every year on the eſtate.—Here is another paper, encloſing a ſufficient ſum for the intended purchaſe; and this paper (delivering into his hands a ſealed packet) is my will, wherein you will find yourſelf (except a few legacies) the ſole inheritor of my perſonal property; your brother, Lord Summerfield, having nobly refuſed to ſhare it, giving as his reaſon, that he had already more than ſufficient, and requeſting you might receive the half I had deſigned for him.

"I have now nothing farther to add, than a wiſh that you will ſee my body interred in the family vault at the village church; and perpetuate my memory by continuing the cuſtom I have hitherto purſued, in raiſing a tomb-ſtone to the memory of ſuch of the pariſhioners as ſhall not forfeit their title to it by any miſdemeanour."

Sir Gregory, now ſunk upon his pillow, entirely exhauſted by ſpeaking ſo long; and after a few moments' ſilence, he turned towards Mr. Mordaunt, and complimented him on the impartial juſtice he had ever evinced in all his concerns with him; hoping he would continue that friendſhip to the ſon, which he had manifeſted for the father.

Mr. Mordaunt, tenderly affected, made a ſuitable reply.

Sir Gregory, now turning towards the Curate, held out his hand, and in broken accents thanked him for his kind attention; and turning to his ſon, who ſat abſorbed in grief, he tenderly embraced him, whilſt in feeble accents he deſired his kindeſt remembrances to Lord Summerfield. Mr. Belmont, overcome by the laſt ſpeech of his worthy father, burſt into a paſſionate flood of tears, which ſomewhat relieved his overcharged breaſt; and embracing him, received his laſt ſigh in his arms!

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE gloom of ſorrow pervaded every ſcene, and penſive melancholy reigned undiſturbed by the cheerful ſound of mirth; which, till lately, had ever found a welcome reception with the inhabitants of Belmont Lodge; but was now precluded to make room for grief and mourning.

The morning came when Sir Gregory Belmont, followed by his houſehold, and the neighbouring villagers, was interred with funeral pomp, and awful ſolemnity, in the vault of his anceſtors; and if any thing could have added to the grief of the ſpectators, it would have been the oration delivered with ſuch an energetic fervency of devotion by the worthy Curate. His grave was conſecrated with the tears of ſincere affection,

affection, whilſt here and there a gentle murmur eſcaped the lips of thoſe who had experienced his benevolence, enumerating his many virtues, and ending in a panegyric in praiſe of his univerſal goodneſs.

The ſervice being over, they ſtood ſtill till Mr. Belmont and his ſuite withdrew, when they ſeparated to return home, the men praiſing the merits of the deceaſed—the women, the manly grace and elegant deportment of the preſent poſſeſſor of the eſtate.

In the courſe of the next week the executors paid the different legacies, which they had no difficulty in doing, as Sir Gregory kept his accounts himſelf with the greateſt correctneſs; when Mr. Mordaunt's buſineſs being completed, and urgent affairs requiring his preſence in London, he told Mr. Belmont that he ſhould depart the day after, and adviſed him, as it was now the middle of November, to ſpend a month or two in the metropolis; and, by enjoying a little ſociety, recruit a freſh ſtock of health

and

and ſpirits, to viſit the country in the Spring.

In this requeſt he was ſo ſtrongly ſeconded by the Curate, who thought it might be the means of mitigating the ſufferings, if not entirely healing the wound, which Sir Gregory's deceaſe had inflicted; that, unable to reſiſt their united ſolicitations, he at length, with much entreaty, conſented to accompany Mr. Mordaunt.

The morning arrived, which was appointed for their departure; and, after ſettling his affairs with Mr. Franklin, who acted in the double capacity of butler and ſteward, and the other ſervants, whom he retained in their former ſituations, he, with Mr. Mordaunt, ſtepped into a chaiſe, accompanied by his ſervant Andrew on horſeback.

They travelled fifty miles the two firſt days, and thirty-five on the third, ſleeping two nights on the road; and, arriving in London at four o'clock on Wedneſday afternoon, they proceeded to the New York Hotel to dinner. Afterwards they ſtrolled up to St. James's in ſearch of a private lodging,

as

as Mr. Belmont's indifferent ſtate of health would not allow him to live in ſo much buſtle and confuſion as is generally experienced in an hotel.

They fortunately met with apartments ready furniſhed; conſiſting of a dining-room and two bed-rooms, which Mr. Belmont immediately engaged, and took poſſeſſion of the ſame evening.

Mr. Mordaunt, after ſettling his young friend comfortably in his new habitation, and ſeeing him more cheerful than he had lately been, roſe to take his leave, cordially ſhaking him by the hand, and hoping ſoon to have the pleaſure of addreſſing him at his Chambers in the Temple by the title of Sir Charles Belmont.

Mr. Belmont bowed; but it was with the majeſtic elegance of ſorrow. Sighing deeply, he replied, that as ſoon as he had purchaſed his dignity, he would taſte the only pleaſure which was now palatable; that was, the company and converſation of him, who had proved himſelf a friend to the afflicted.

"Oh!

"Oh! baniſh your ſorrow with your compliments, Charles, for Heaven's ſake," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "and leave off flattery! for conſider I am but a young man, and Counſellors are generally reputed (not without ſome cauſe I will allow) to be poſſeſſed of a very competent ſhare of vanity. So you ſee, by adding a few grains more to the general allowance (which is ſo liberal that it needs no addition) you will abſolutely make me an inſufferable piece of aſſurance; therefore, to enſure you a friend, I am neceſſitated to wiſh you a good night."

This ſpeech had the deſired effect, by producing a ſmile on the ſaddened features of Mr. Belmont, who again wiſhing him a good night, retired to a neat and comfortable bed, to enjoy that repoſe to which he had for ſome time paſt been an entire ſtranger.

The clock was juſt ſtriking the hour of eight, when Mr. Belmont, awaking from a refreſhing ſlumber, which had ſomewhat invigorated his depreſſed ſpirits, and renewed the bloom of returning health upon his

his pallid countenance, rang his bell, which Mr. Andrew hearing, was obliged to break up his conference with Mrs. Betty in the kitchen, from whom he had been learning the hiſtory of the family; and, aſſuming thoſe airs of ſelf-importance, which a man generally puts on when he thinks he has a profound ſecret in his poſſeſſion, and by that means knows more than his neighbours, (eſpecially if he be a gentleman's gentleman, for ſuch Mr. Andrew called himſelf) he opened his maſter's door, to receive his commands.

"Do you know at what hour the family breakfaſt, Andrew?" aſked Mr. Belmont.

"Mrs. Betty informs me exactly at nine, Sir."

"Then bring my dreſſing-box and ſhaving materials, as I ſhall riſe immediately; and do you go to this Mrs. Betty, and tell her, I will thank her to carry my compliments to her miſtreſs, and if it will not be thought encroaching upon her civility, or intruding on the regular hours of the family, I ſhould wiſh to board with them."

Andrew

Andrew not only ſeemed pleaſed with his maſter's apparent cheerfulneſs, but much more ſo at the propoſal he made of boarding with the family; but as we are not ſkilled in the art of foretelling, or interpreting other people's thoughts, we cannot find a ſolution to that enigmatical ſmile which played upon his countenance as he withdrew.

Mr. Belmont had juſt finiſhed ſhaving himſelf when Andrew returned; and as Andrew was a gentleman of great addreſs, (for how could he be otherwiſe, having reſided ſo long at Oxford, where every individual is conducted by the Graces to the ſeat of the Muſes, and by them initiated into the order of Minerva?) well, as Andrew was this gentleman, he could not think of addreſſing his maſter without a bow, ſtately or humble, as the nature of his diſcourſe required. With a bow therefore, ſomewhat inclined to the majeſtic, he delivered "Mrs. Maitland's compliments; and as, from the character ſhe had heard of Mr. Belmont, ſhe expected

to

to find the gentleman and man of honour combined, ſhe could have no objection to accede to his wiſhes."

This meſſage which, delivered by Mr. Andrew, ſeemed couched in pompous terms, made Mr. Belmont almoſt wiſh he had not aſked what ſeemed ſo great a favour; but ſitting down without anſwering the meſſage, he ordered Andrew to dreſs his hair, aſking him, at the ſame time, what he had heard of Mrs. Maitland?

Andrew, taking this queſtion as a free permiſſion to exerciſe that little member, the tongue, took out his handkerchief, and hemmed three times to clear his articulation. Having finiſhed this prologue to his ſpeech, he began by telling his maſter, that Mrs. Betty had informed him her miſtreſs was the widow of a Colonel in the army, who had met with many misfortunes, which diſobliged his rich relations; and after being wounded, and retiring on half pay, they would never notice him.

"He died of a broken heart eight years ago," added Andrew; "it was ſuppoſed in

conſequence

conſequence of this unkind treatment, and left his widow poſſeſſed of no other fortune than his furniture, and a ſmall annuity, which a relation of her's had ſettled upon her for life only; ſo it was not transferable.

"Finding this too ſmall to live upon, ſhe was adviſed by a couſin of her huſband's, who ſometimes viſited her unknown to his family, to take this houſe, which was then to let, and furniſh it with her late huſband's goods. She followed his advice; and, by living frugally, beſides what ſhe got by letting out her houſe, ſhe was enabled to keep her daughter at ſchool, who ——"

"Daughter!" ſaid Mr. Belmont, interrupting him; "has ſhe then a daughter?"

"Bleſs me! yes, Sir," ſaid Andrew, ſmiling (the ſmile was now explained.) "Did not I tell you ſo before?"

"No," ſaid Mr. Belmont; "you furniſhed out a repaſt with great taſte, Andrew, but forgot the deſſert."

"Why, what a blockhead I muſt be, Sir," ſaid Andrew, "not to give *quantum ſufficit!*

ſufficit! for you know a deſſert is always looked upon as the beſt part of the feaſt; and I will be hanged if you do not find it ſo, that is, if Miſs Anna Maitland anſwers Mrs. Betty's deſcription."

"You are unuſually eloquent this morning, Andrew," ſaid Mr. Belmont, with a ſmile; "I fancy Mrs. Betty is a very pleaſant companion. But pray, is the young lady you ſpeak of at home?"

"She has been at home theſe two years," ſaid Andrew.

A period was now put to Mr. Andrew's eloquence, as his maſter had finiſhed dreſſing, and we ſhall now leave him occupied in unpacking the portmanteau, whilſt we deſcend with Mr. Belmont; who, with a heart prepoſſeſſed in favour of both ladies by the knowledge of their birth and misfortunes, and a fine countenance ſtill clouded with an expreſſive ſorrow by reflecting on his own recent loſs, was not an unintereſting figure.

The door of the breakfaſt-parlour, in which the ladies were ſitting, was now opened

opened by Mrs. Betty, who, with an officious politeneſs, uſhered in "Mr. Belmont," and withdrew.

Mr. Belmont advanced, and reſpectfully ſaluted Mrs. Maitland with the compliments of the morning. He found her an elegant woman in her manners, though on the wrong ſide of fifty. Her countenance ſtill retained the veſtiges of beauty, though time and misfortune had combined in endeavouring to efface them.

Mrs. Maitland, then taking the young lady by the hand, introduced her to Mr. Belmont as her daughter, Miſs Maitland. Not expecting, by Andrew's deſcription, to find the young lady, who had left the ſchool but two years, converted into a tall, elegant figure of a woman, with a beautiful countenance, dignified by a ſhade of tender ſoftneſs, rendered more expreſſive by a ſoft blue eye, ſhaded by a long dark eye-laſh, Mr. Belmont was at firſt at a loſs for a reply; but ſuddenly recovering from his tranſient ſtupefaction, he made ample amends

by

by addreſſing her in a very elegant ſpeech, which ſhe returned with intereſt.

The introductory ceremony being over, breakfaſt was ordered, and the converſation turned on various ſubjects, which was ſupported by ſo much judgment and graceful elocution by all parties, that they retired mutually pleaſed with each other.

CHAP. III.

MR. BELMONT, now Sir Charles, having (accompanied by his friend Mr. Mordaunt) procured his title, was no longer heard to complain of the ſlow lapſe of time, which flew with ſuch evaneſcent rapidity, beguiled by the pleaſures which ſpring from the knowledge of a mutual attachment, that eight months had already, unnoticed, tranſpired ſince his firſt arrival in the metropolis; and eight months more would

moſt probably have paſſed on in the ſame manner, had not a friendly letter from the Curate rouſed him from his lethargy.

The more ſerious part of my readers may, perhaps, wiſh to ſee an epiſtle from a man who has been ſo much ſpoken of; and as it is my wiſh to pleaſe (however ineffectual it may prove), I ſhall inſert it *verbatim*.

TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

"DEAR SIR, *July* 18*th*.

"Seven months have now elapſed ſince I have heard any thing from you, and eight ſince your departure from the paternal ſeat of your anceſtors.

"The poor and helpleſs, fed by the hand of your deceaſed parent, cry aloud for his ſucceſſor with ſorrow the moſt penetrating.

"My affection for you, enforced by the memory of your honoured father, impels me to admoniſh you againſt the temptations which abound in the metropolis.

"Deem

"Deem me not importunate for cautioning you againſt the allurements of the world! Fifty years' ſtudy of mankind evince how few, how very few, there are, who have fortitude enough to reſiſt the ſilken net, ſpread for the deſtruction of the inexperienced!

"Of all vices, ſhun gaming as you would a peſtilence; its approach is eaſy—its effects the moſt dreadful!"

"Of all the paſſions man is heir to, Love is the moſt violent and inſurmountable; and in the contending ſtruggle, the perſon and the paſſion too frequently ſink together into the cold and ſilent tomb! Of this be careful, unleſs the object which excites it, be worthy of your affection.

"Avoid unequal matches, and ſecret marriage, as they are invariably attended with difficulties.

"But ſhould you have placed your affections on an object worthy of them, yo[ur] tenants, your neighbours, and pariſhi[oners] will rejoice to greet her as Lady of P[elmont] Lodge! Queſtions of this nature [are often]

[put]

put to me, which not being able to anſwer, they return to their habitations diſappointed and dejected.

"Pardon the liberty of this admonition. Return to your poſſeſſions as perfect as you left them, and every heart will be glad; but none more than that now pouring out its eſteem in the ſignature of,

"Dear Sir, your ſincere friend,

"RICHARD TRUELOVE."

Sir Charles mentally thanking the worthy Curate for his advice, whilſt folding up the letter, and placing it in his pocket, reſolved, as he had now obtained Mrs. Maitland's conſent to addreſs her daughter, to bring matters to a final iſſue with Miſs Maitland.

Purſuant to this reſolution, he went to ſeek her in the muſic-room. She was ſitting at the harpſichord practiſing one of his favourite leſſons. Apologizing for his intruſion, he told her the urgency of his buſineſs, when known, would ſufficiently excuſe him.

Miſs Maitland, in ſilent expectation, fearing he had received ſome ill news, but afraid

afraid to enquire left her fears ſhould be verified, cloſed her book, and waited for the concluſion of his ſpeech.

"Time, my dear Miſs Maitland," ſaid Sir Charles, ſeating himſelf in a chair by her ſide, "has flown with ſuch amazing and imperceptible velocity in the charming ſociety of your reſpected mother and yourſelf, that, ere I was conſcious of its motion, Mr. Truelove informs me eight months have already tranſpired.

"By this intelligence I am neceſſitated to return, having been unmindful of a promiſe I am bound to perform, which is, to ſpend three or four months in every year at Belmont Lodge; and the Curate, anxious for my honour, tells me my tenants, and the neighbouring villagers, wiſh for my return; and, by my long abſence, begin to fear that I have neglected my promiſe."

"What day then have you fixed on for your departure, Sir Charles?" ſaid Miſs Maitland, with a ſigh, which ſhe was unable to ſuppreſs.

"The day after to-morrow," he replied; "but even thoſe, who are anxious to ſee me, do not wiſh to ſee me alone." (Miſs Maitland looked upon Sir Charles with an air of aſtoniſhment.) "They wiſh me to return with a lady of the name of Belmont, whoſe merit might teach them to eſteem her; whoſe compaſſionate diſpoſition would lead her to enquire for the children of misfortune, and heal the wounds of ſorrow with the balm of conſoling pity."

A tear ſtood trembling in Miſs Maitland's eye, as if heſitating whether to return to its ſource, or by ſtrolling down the cheek, deſcribe the tender feelings of her ſoul; but whilſt in this ſituation, a more tender idea afforded a freſh ſupply, and overflowing its ſilken boundaries, fell upon her hand. Confuſed, ſhe haſtily wiped it off; but not before Sir Charles had perceived it, who reſpectfully ſaid—

"I muſt deſpair of ever finding this lady, unleſs my dear Miſs Maitland will lend her friendly aſſiſtance to aid me in my reſearches."

Not appearing to understand his meaning, or rather fearful she might misunderstand it in thinking he alluded to her, she replied—

"Sir Charles Belmont knows that my acquaintance is confined to a very limited and restrained circle; and that being the case, I should think that my mother, from her knowledge and experience of the world, might be a much better guide to conduct him to such a person as he describes."

An *eclaircissement* now took place; when, after much persuasion and entreaty on one side, and much hesitation and blushing on the other, it was mutually agreed that Mr. Belmont should return to London the beginning of December, when Miss Maitland was to assume the name of Belmont.

He was, therefore, contented to visit Belmont Lodge, unaccompanied, this time, solaced with the idea that it would be the last. He was received by them with every demonstration of joy; by the worthy Curate with transport; by Anthony and Martha, the housekeeper, and Mr. Frank-

lin, with affection; by the remainder with pleaſure; and was highly gratified by finding his eſtate improved, and his accounts correct; where we ſhall now leave him exerciſing the virtues of charity and benevolence around him, and beloved by all who know him.——

Were I poſſeſſed of Sterne's ſentimental pen, I would apoſtrophize thee, Abſence! It is thou alone who art the primary cauſe of every misfortune which befals poor helpleſs mortals; for in the abſence of Reaſon man often forfeits his honour in an unguarded moment, and woman loſes her character irretrievably.

In the abſence of Health, death often bereaves a parent of the child of promiſe; a family of its beſt friend; or a lover of the object of his affections.

In the abſence of Charity, Defamation aims her ſhafts at the unprotected heart of Poverty.

In the abſence of Fortune, merit is ſuffered by the world to languiſh in priſon, diſregarded, and forgotten.

In

In the abſence of Adverſity, the heart too frequently becomes callous, and incapable of receiving the impreſſion of pity at the ſight of grief or miſery.

In the abſence of a lover, the ſtorm of paſſion often ſubſides.

In the abſence of a friend, the flame of friendſhip itſelf will be extinguiſhed by indifference.—Then to thee alone may we impute the ſorrows of calamity! the reproaches of a bad conſcience! the loſs of friendſhip! the purſe-proud inſolence of proſperity! merit diſregarded! virtue overlooked! and the anguiſh of unrequited love!

Yet neither of theſe cauſes, or effects, was the occaſion of Miſs Maitland's uneaſineſs; it was a temporary baniſhment only from the deſtined partner of her pains and pleaſures.

She could not refrain from tears when Sir Charles Belmont departed; but, aſhamed of her weakneſs, ſhe uſed her utmoſt endeavours to baniſh reflection. She walked from room to room, ſeating herſelf in thoſe

chairs where she had last seen him; it only renewed her sorrow. She retired to the music-room, and sat down to begin his favourite lesson; but the sight of a pocket-book, with a paper sealed up, addressed to herself, prevented her. She took up the note; it contained only a few lines from Sir Charles, requesting her acceptance of the book; which she found, upon opening, contained notes to the amount of five hundred pounds. Hurt at being considered by her lover as an object of charity, yet overcome by his generosity, she pressed it to her lips, and expressed her gratitude by the tear which she could not restrain—it was a tribute due to benevolence. She appeared satisfied, and went to seek Mrs. Maitland, who, though very tenacious of her dignity, after reading the note, told her daughter she could not consider it in the same view she did; and, by the elegant manner in which it was presented, thought she ought not by any means to refuse it. "Though," added she, "I am no advocate for young women receiving presents before marriage,

marriage, yet you muſt retain that; for to return it, would be an abſolute inſult.

Four months had now elapſed, occupied in making preparations for the approaching nuptials; when Sir Charles, who had looked forward with great anxiety to the time appointed for his return, arrived on the wings of impatience (in good health and ſpirits, attended by Andrew and Anthony) at the houſe which contained the object whom he ſo ardently loved.

In the courſe of the next week he received from Mr. Mordaunt, who acted as father upon the occaſion, the hand of Miſs Maitland. Her valuable heart had long been in his poſſeſſion; and her excellent underſtanding, and charming diſpoſition, promiſed a long ſeries of happy and peaceful enjoyments to her now enraptured huſband.

The ceremony was performed at St. George's Church, Hanover Square. The company conſiſted of Mrs. Maitland, the bride and bridegroom, Mr. Mordaunt, and two young ladies, who acted as bride-maids;

and the day was paſſed at Mrs. Maitland's in thoſe rational amuſements, and refined converſation, which never fail to improve the underſtanding, and leave the mind delighted and gratified.

A few days after the nuptials, Sir Charles, having been to viſit his friend, Mr. Mordaunt, at his chambers in the Temple, leaving Lady Belmont at home on account of a trifling indiſpoſition, was met by Andrew.

"Here is a letter for you, Sir," ſaid Andrew, "which the poſtman has juſt given me. Will you pleaſe to have it now, or ſhall I take it home?"

"Let me firſt look at the ſuperſcription," ſaid Sir Charles; when perceiving it to be his brother's (Lord Summerfield), he told Andrew that he might leave it; and, ſtepping into a haberdaſher's ſhop, aſked to look at a pair of gloves, that he might have an opportunity of reading its contents; when breaking open the ſeal, he read as follows:—

TO

TO SIR CHARLES BELMONT.

"SIR,

"Having heard, from a private correſpondent in London, that you have had the temerity to introduce a beggar into my family, without either my knowledge or conſent, and againſt every ſenſe of propriety or decorum, I here ſolemnly declare, that I will never more have any connexion with the man, either directly or indirectly, who could, with ſuch daring and ſhameleſs effrontery, inſult and degrade his family honours and dignities.

"This being my final and unalterable determination, I deſire that Sir Charles Belmont may ever remain an entire ſtranger to the houſe, intereſt, actions, and perſon of his much-injured, and never to be reconciled brother,

"SUMMERFIELD."

Sir Charles, on reading this cruel epiſtle, penned by the hand of a brother, whom he had always looked on with the eyes of fraternal affection, trembled, and tottering to a chair, turned pale.

The

The woman of the ſhop, dreadfully alarmed at ſeeing him in this condition, was going to call for aſſiſtance; but Sir Charles, ſomewhat recovered, told her there was no occaſion for any, as his indiſpoſition was only cauſed by a ſudden ſurpriſe; and if ſhe would be kind enough to give him a glaſs of water, he ſhould be able to purſue his walk.

The woman ſoon returned with it; and after he had drank, and found himſelf ſomewhat better, he purchaſed a pair of gloves; and, thanking her for her civility, quitted the ſhop, and proceeded towards St. James's Street.

CHAP. IV.

HE purſued his walk with downcaſt eyes and a penſive ſtep, which ſhewed his heart was ill at eaſe, his thoughts ſtill recurring to the epiſtle he had juſt received.

He

He knew that attempting to bring about a reconciliation with his brother would be of no avail; for he was implacable when once offended, and was never known to forgive an injury. Imperious in his diſpoſition, and fond of abſolute power, his vanity made him inſufferable to his equals, and contemptuous to his inferiors—he was therefore equally deſpiſed by both; yet with all his failings (or rather vices) Sir Charles eſteemed him; for Lord Summerfield had twice behaved with a nobleneſs of ſoul, which he could not have thought he poſſeſſed—once was in beſtowing a penſion on a poor ſailor, when he held the rank of Lieutenant only; and the other was in reſigning his ſhare of the paternal fortune.

Sir Charles could not reconcile the idea with his feelings, of living in enmity with his neareſt relative; but as he ſaw no poſſibility of avoiding the threatened evil, he wiſely concluded to bear it with as much indifference as he could muſter, and return to Belmont Lodge as ſoon as poſſible.

The next morning, as ſoon as the family had aſſembled round the breakfaſt-table, he addreſſed Lady Belmont, ſaying—

"My dear Anna, June is now faſt approaching; and as the month of May, by all country people, is conſidered as the Mother of Love, I have made an engagement without your knowledge, which, I flatter myſelf, you will enable me to perform when you are made acquainted with it; and that is to introduce you in the character of Lady Belmont to my handſome country neighbours."

"Your engagement is ſomewhat premature, I muſt confeſs," rejoined Lady Belmont; "but as it flatters my vanity, I ſhall make no ſcruple in accepting your invitation."

"That is kind, my Anna. And may I hope for the pleaſure of Mrs. Maitland's ſociety at Belmont?"

"I ſhould be happy, if it were in my power, to comply with the wiſhes of my dear children," ſaid Mrs. Maitland, "and am obliged to you, Sir Charles, for your offer; but

but I am prevented from accepting it by a promiſe I made a gentleman and lady in Hampſhire, who were the particular friends of Mr. Maitland, that whenever my daughter ſhould be ſeparated from me, I would make their houſe my home. I wrote to them a few days ſince, and acquainted them that they might ſhortly expect me, as your departure will be the ſignal for mine;—and believe me when I aſſure you, I was never better pleaſed than in my Anna's choice of her noble protector; for I think ſhe has ſelected for herſelf long and permanent happineſs."

Sir Charles expreſſed his grateful ſentiments by his animated looks; whilſt Lady Belmont, tenderly affected at her mother's encomiums on him, walked towards the window to conceal her emotion.

The breakfaſt equipage being removed, Sir Charles went into the ſtudy to write to his houſekeeper, ordering her to prepare every thing immediately for the reception of Lady Belmont and himſelf, as he ſhould

ſet off early on Monday, and expected to be down by Wedneſday evening.

When the houſekeeper received this letter, after communicating its contents to the butler, ſhe ſummoned all the ſervants to attend her in her own room; when, after telling them that Sir Charles and Lady Belmont were expected in a few days, ſhe deſired they would take particular care to have every thing clean and neat in their ſeveral departments, and diſmiſſed them.

Meanwhile preparations for the journey were made with ſuch alacrity by Anthony and Andrew, that the chaiſe, which was to convey their maſter and miſtreſs from London, was ready by ſeven o'clock in the morning. The parting between Mrs. Maitland and her daughter was affecting—with Sir Charles, affectionate; when hurrying into the chaiſe, it drove away with great velocity, preceded by Anthony, who rode on to prepare refreſhments and poſt-horſes, whilſt Andrew followed them.

We ſhall now leave them to purſue the road we have ſo often travelled before, through

through High Wycomb, Buckingham, Brackley, and Stratford, whilſt we return to Mrs. Maitland, who, overwhelmed with grief at parting with her daughter, was endeavouring to divert her reflections by preparing for her own journey.

After ſeeing packed up thoſe things which ſhe intended to take with her, and ſettling affairs with her landlord, ſhe ſent for an appraiſer, who valued the goods, furniture, and prints (of which there was a very good collection) at five hundred pounds; and, ſending ſomebody to take poſſeſſion of them, he paid the money.

Affairs being finally adjuſted, the next morning Mrs. Maitland, attended by Mrs. Betty, ſet off in a poſt-chaiſe for Hampſhire, where ſhe was received with ſo much affectionate care and polite attention by the good gentleman and lady, that it very ſoon reconciled her to a ſeparation from her daughter.——

At the hour of eight in the evening, Anthony entered the village, ſpurring his

his horſe, to make himſelf appear of ſome conſequence in the eyes of the villagers. Anthony's vanity was quickly gratified by the appearance of every family at their doors; who, upon ſeeing him, exclaimed, in joyful accents, "Anthony is come! Anthony is come!" and aſſembling round him, would not let him proceed to ſhew his ſkill in horſemanſhip, till he had anſwered their eager enquiries after his health, and repeated queſtions of "When does Sir Charles come? When will they come?"—Almoſt out of patience with repeating the ſame anſwers ſo many times, he ſtood up in his ſtirrups, and waving his hand as a ſignal to be heard, ſaid, "My friends, Anthony muſt go on, for his maſter and miſtreſs are but three miles behind him." They immediately made way for him, when he galloped towards Belmont Lodge.

The key of the church was immediately procured, and the bells ſet a ringing, whilſt the remainder of the villagers, men, women, and children, walked up the road to meet them.

Anthony

Anthony, in the meantime, had arrived at Belmont Lodge; and was fully engaged in giving his fellow-ſervants a deſcription of what places he had been to, what ſights he had ſeen, and what ſort of a lady his miſtreſs was; with which they were ſo much pleaſed, that it was with the utmoſt impatience they waited her arrival.

The houſekeeper was buſy in preparing an elegant cold collation, and adorning the diſhes with her niceſt art, when the Curate made his entry. The good old man was ſo anxious to be introduced to the lady of Sir Charles (whom he tenderly eſteemed as being nearly exempt from thoſe foibles and follies with which the generality of the youth of the preſent age are ſo much addicted to), that, although very much fatigued with a long walk he had been taking, he could not forbear ſnatching up his hat and ſtick, and going over to the Lodge, where he now addreſſed the houſekeeper, ſaying:—

"So,

"So, Mrs. Butler, your maſter and miſtreſs [illegible] not arrived yet? But I ſee you expect them."

"Yes, Sir," ſaid the houſekeeper, who had juſt finiſhed; and taking up the candle, aſked him to walk into the parlour, where placing a chair for him, ſhe continued—"I expect them very ſhortly, unleſs the villagers retard them; for it is now above half an hour ſince they all went out to meet them, when they were not more than three miles off; and I muſt own their impatience does not exceed mine, for I wiſh very much to ſee my Lady, as I think this promiſes to be the happieſt day we have known for many years."

"I have not the leaſt doubt but it will prove ſo," ſaid the Curate.

"Nor I," ſaid Mrs. Butler, "if ſhe is but as good as Sir Charles; for he is adored by every body."

But it is now time to look back on our travellers, who were witneſſing the full moon emerging from a cloud, which, envious of its beauty, had endeavoured to ſhroud the mild

mild luminary in the veil of darkneſs; but, reſiſting its effort, it was now riſing to commence its career through the arched vault of heaven, which, ſpangled with innumerable ſtars, diffuſed ſo ſoft a light and ſhade, that the ſcenery around them ſeemed the effect of enchantment; whilſt the moon-beams, enamoured with its reflection on the water, appeared to ſleep delighted on the boſom of the Severn, which was plainly diſtinguiſhed, at intervals, through the interjacent woods and trees.

On the firſt ſight of the carriage, the villagers, taking off their hats, huzzaed three times; which was immediately anſwered by Mr. Andrew, who was cloſe behind it, in the ſame manner.

Sir Charles, on hearing this uncommon ſalutation, drew down the glaſs to ſee what was the occaſion of it, when recognizing Dicky Goodman, and two or three more of the villagers, he divined the reſt. A tear bedewed his eye, which nought but the pen of a Lawrence Sterne can deſcribe, or trace the ſource from which it flowed. It was

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not the tear of ſorrow, nor yet the tear of joy or gratitude; but it ſprang from a ſenſation, or ſentiment, ariſing from that inward ſatisfaction of the ſoul, that mental glow of happineſs, which few are ſenſible of, and which makes thoſe who are, feel as if already tranſported into the heavenly regions.

Such, then, was the tear which ſtood in the eye of Sir Charles; whilſt turning to Lady Belmont, he told her, "ſhe was now going to receive a compliment of reſpect from the villagers, who had come to conduct her to Belmont Lodge as its miſtreſs; that ſhe would find it artleſs and ſincere, but muſt expect, at the ſame time, to find it unpoliſhed."

"I am gratefully obliged to the worthy votaries of truth and innocence, my dear Sir," ſaid Lady Belmont; "for ſincerity in my eyes needs no blandiſhments to render it pleaſing."

"That was ſpoken like my dear Anna," ſaid Sir Charles, taking her hand, and preſſing it to his lips, "and is worthy of the heart which dictated ſo noble a ſentiment; and

and which, when its fair poſſeſſor is the miſtreſs of Belmont, will diffuſe peace and happineſs to all who come within its influence."

"I know not what ſchool you were educated in, Sir Charles," replied Lady Belmont, gratefully preſſing his hand for his eulogium, "but you certainly had a very able tutor to teach you the ſeducing art of flattery, for you have become ſo great a proficient in the ſcience."

The chaiſe had now overtaken the villagers, who, with loud huzzas, exclaimed, "Long live Sir Charles and Lady Belmont!" whilſt the little children, taught by their mothers, innocently liſped their congratulations.

Lady Belmont, with tears in her eyes, affectionately thanked them, throwing out at the ſame time a handful of ſilver; whilſt Sir Charles, with ſcrutinizing eyes, appeared to be penetrating her heart, as if to diſcover on what baſis he had raiſed his hopes of happineſs; but ſoon averted them, ſeem-

ingly well pleaſed at having built them on one ſo ſecure.

The worthy villagers having conducted the carriage to the gates of Belmont Lodge, and aſſiſted Lady Belmont to alight, were preparing to return home, when Sir Charles, addreſſing them, ſaid:—

"My worthy friends, to-morrow I ſhall give a dinner in the hall, at one o'clock, to as many of you, and your families, as will favour me with your company."

"God bleſs you, Sir Charles! God bleſs you, Sir Charles!" reiterated from every quarter; when, wiſhing them a good night, they withdrew to the village.

Lady Belmont was now conducted by Sir Charles through the hall, which was lined with the ſervants, who, curtſeying, "hoped her Ladyſhip was well?"—She returned their obeiſance and enquiries with affability, and was led by Sir Charles to the parlour, where he was ſurpriſed to ſee the Curate.

After their mutual congratulations, he was introduced to Lady Belmont, who received him with great affability; when the houſekeeper

housekeeper coming in to pay her respects to her Lady, informed her supper was on table; they accordingly withdrew to the other room.

Supper being over, the Curate returned home, rejoiced that his friend had selected so amiable a woman; and the happy couple retired to enjoy that peaceful slumber which is inseparable from the pillow of innocence.

CHAP. V.

THE next morning was spent in walking over the estate, and visiting the environs of Belmont, which greatly exceeded all that her Ladyship had conceived of it. The scenery around the estate furnished amusement for those who admired the awful and sublime, as well as to those who were pleased with the softer landscapes of Nature. Here abounded immense coal-pits, with lead and

other mines, ſurrounded by high hills bare of verdure; whilſt, on the oppoſite ſide, Nature ſpread her velvet carpet, adorning the fields and meadows with her richeſt verdure, and ſpreading with her luxuriant hand the golden harveſt, which Labour was now preparing to reap.

"How enviable is my ſituation!" ſaid Lady Belmont. "How preferable to thoſe who, blind to the beauties of Nature, live confined within the narrow limits of the venal metropolis, where, too often, the noble paſſions of the ſoul are loſt in the inordinate purſuit of pleaſure, or abſorbed in the avaricious and immoderate deſire of obtaining riches!"

"Your obſervation is a very juſt one," ſaid Sir Charles, "if reſtrained within its proper limits. But whilſt we reflect on the weakneſs of the man, who ſuffers himſelf to be led away in the purſuit of ſenſual gratification, or of him who, guided by one ſordid principle, graſps at every thing within his reach, with no other view than the pitiful pleaſure of counting over

his

his riches to himſelf, we muſt not include many valuable and worthy members of the community. Inſtance the merchant;—but even granting he may be guided by mercenary motives; yet, if he acts but with common honeſty in his ultramarine concerns, the ultimate muſt be beneficial to mankind. In the firſt place, by carrying on a commercial intercourſe with foreign nations, he extends the honour, power, and fame of his own; and by the duties which are laid upon exported and imported commodities, brings an immenſe revenue into the Exchequer, and by that means enhances the internal credit of this kingdom. In the ſecond place, by his general intercourſe with mankind, he learns their national characters, their peculiar cuſtoms, laws, and languages,—the natural produce of each country, with the temperature of each climate; and thus by traffic improves and refines the manners of every nation which he trades to: in ſhort, by the utility or this ſingle trade, I think it overbalances every other combined. I may be unjuſt

in my computations; but, at leaſt, I look upon the claſs of merchants to be the firſt and ſtrongeſt pillar of any State or Government, whether it be Ariſtocratic, Democratic, Deſpotic, Oligarchical, Republican, or Monarchical.

"I could enumerate many other claſſes of men, who, by their commercial concerns, cement the intereſt of the higher with the lower orders of ſociety; which junction makes the rich (if guided by no other principle than ſelf-intereſt) guard with a watchful eye, and preſerving hand, the privileges of the poor from encroachment. But we muſt now think of returning, as our honeſt villagers muſt by this time have aſſembled in the hall, and they will be diſappointed if they have not the pleaſure of drinking the health of my dear Anna."

When they returned, they found the happy people had already dined. Sir Charles and Lady Belmont's health was immediately drank with burſts of applauſe. When ſilence was again reſtored, Sir Charles walked

walked round the table, addreſſing every one by aſking ſome queſtion, or advice; whilſt Lady Belmont enquired into the families, of the wives, the method of bringing up their children, and their means of ſubſiſtence. Sir Charles and Lady Belmont now took their leave, hoping they would make themſelves happy; and, in order to contribute to their amuſement, he had ordered the blind man, who played upon the pipe and tabor, to viſit them in the evening, that they might have a dance in the hall. This happy ſociety returned their thanks in the expreſſive voice of gratitude, when Sir Charles and his Lady withdrew, thus leaving them to enjoy, without reſtraint, the pleaſure that flows from benevolence!

How happy muſt they be, who, bleſſed with an affluent fortune, and poſſeſſed of a generous heart expanded by a liberal education, combine their inclination with their power, to dreſs the human countenance in the ſmiles of peaceful content! As the ſummer's ſun diſpels the winter's ſnow, and

by its genial warmth diſſolves the icy chains which retain all vegetation in the congealed bonds of captivity, or by its increaſing ſtrength, chaſes away from the broad expanſive face of heaven the dark threatening clouds big with the impending ſtorm, thus re-animating creation with its invigorating ſmiles, and renovating this conglobate earth with the mild and delicate beauties of returning Spring; ſo does the heart of philanthropic benevolence, with the hand of generoſity, diſunite the chains of adverſity or affliction, and relieve the oppreſſed heart of the child of misfortune from the thraldom of deſpair, diſpelling the ſaddened clouds of ſorrow from the brow, and embelliſhing the countenance with thoſe peaceful ſmiles of mental ſatisfaction which adorned it in its primitive ſtate of infancy, when, yet a ſtranger to the innumerable cares and ſorrows which are liable to overtake every mortal in their progreſs through the different ſcenes and ſtages of life, it was conducted by innocence through the realms of infant bliſs.

At

At the expiration of the other four months Lady Belmont preſented Sir Charles with a ſon and heir, who was chriſtened George, after his irreconcileable brother, Lord Summerfield; who, though the diſtance between the eſtates of Eliſmere and Belmont did not exceed fifteen miles, perſiſted in his determination of living in perpetual enmity with his brother, prohibiting his ſervants from ever mentioning his or Lady Belmont's name in his preſence, declaring an inſtant diſmiſſal from his ſervice ſhould be the conſequence of their diſobedience.

Paſſion now ſubſided into that calm, peaceful, and pleaſing ſerenity, which renders the mixed potion of Fortune (offered in the cup of life by the hand of Fate) palatable, by infuſing into it that mellifluent drop of tender and reciprocal affectionate friendſhip, which, by preferring the happineſs of the object eſteemed to its own, excites every faculty of the ſoul, and every virtue of the mind to its nobleſt exertion in endeavouring to promote it.

Two years thus elapſed at Belmont in the full enjoyment of every earthly bleſſing; and the retrograde motion of time would have been wholly unobſerved, had not its amiable poſſeſſors taken care to diſtinguiſh each ſucceeding day from the preceding one, by ſome act of generoſity or munificence, either in relieving the diſtreſſed, promoting virtue, or rewarding merit.

Sir Charles, bleſſed with an amiable wife and a fine boy, thought himſelf arrived at the ſummit of bliſs, where no misfortune could approach to hurt him; but ſad experience is commiſſioned to teach man that happineſs, unmixed, is not the lot ordained by Providence for him in this probationary ſtate; for then he would be expoſed to no temptations which might try his fortitude and ſtrength in virtue. He would then, in his journey through life, never be aſſailed by Adverſity, who, though generally looked upon as a troubleſome companion, if man were to ſtudy his intereſt inſtead of his eaſe, would be thought his beſt

beſt friend. Her precepts are harſh, and therefore rarely followed. Her company is generally deſpiſed and avoided; for ſhe never fails to lead her votaries through a long train of afflictions, by that means weaning their attachment from this world, and directing them to a better, as a recompence for their perſeverance in integrity;—for as gold undergoes many preparations, and muſt be defecated ere it arrives at a ſtate of perfection,—ſo muſt the heart of man be purified from thoſe groſs particles, which are naturally attached to it in this life, by Adverſity, ere it can arrive at that ſtate of ſupreme excellence, which fits it for the manſions of eternity.

Sir Charles was now ſitting in his ſtudy, with his elbow on the table, and his head penſively reclined on the back of his hand, reading Hervey's Meditations, when Martha came in quite out of breath, to tell her maſter that her Ladyſhip had preſented him with a daughter in addition to his family; but the Doctor was very much afraid ſhe could not live. Every hope depended on

remaining perfectly quiet, and that it was impoſſible to let any one ſee her; but if he perceived any alteration for the worſe, he would ſend down to Sir Charles immediately, as he intended to remain with her the whole night.

He put a crown into Martha's hand as a reward for her intelligence, not one of the family having ſuppoſed ſhe could have ſurvived ſo long; and, as it was no worſe, he flattered himſelf it might be better, though he was ſtill in a ſtate of great anxiety and ſuſpenſe. But as he was prohibited ſeeing her, he retired to procure, if poſſible, a ſhort repoſe, not having cloſed his eyes the three preceding nights.

Two months now paſſed away, in which time Lady Belmont had ſo far recovered as to be able to proceed, by ſlow and eaſy ſtages, to Briſtol, where ſhe was ordered to try what effect the waters and hot wells would have upon her. After trying both for the ſpace of a month, Sir Charles had the pleaſure to ſee her health very nearly renovated; when, continuing a ſhort

time

time longer, they returned to Belmont Lodge.

CHAP. VI.

LITTLE George was now entering his tenth year, and, for his age, was a fine tall boy; but as Lord Chesterfield at that age looks upon them as superior to childhood, and dignifies them with the appellation of "youth," I must not presume to derogate his consequence therefore by the *little* title, as he was now the pupil and companion of his father; Sir Charles not approving of public seminaries until the principles of youth were too firmly established on the solid basis of virtue, to be shaken from their foundation by the powerful force of example, rather chusing to educate his son himself, than have those seeds of virtue eradicated,

dicated, which he had ſown in ſo fertile a ſoil.

Sir Charles made his ſon a preſent of a very handſome fiſhing-rod on his birth-day, as he was remarkably fond of angling, which he was ſo proud of, that every moment he could ſpare from his ſtudies was ſpent at the bottom of the lawn. As he was purſuing this, his favourite amuſement, one day that his father had granted him a half holiday, a large pike ſeized the bait with ſuch avidity, that it ſwallowed the hook. George let out his line to give it full play; but it continued pulling with as much violence as ever. Unwilling to loſe his handſome fiſhing-rod, yet ſcarcely able to hold it, he ſtood up; when leaning too forward over the margin of the river, he over-balanced himſelf, and, not being able to recover his equilibrium, plunged in head foremoſt!

Andrew, who was providentially at a little diſtance employed with an iron roller, as he always ſought ſome excuſe to be near his young maſter, hearing the noiſe which the water

water made, occaſioned by the fall, ran with incredible ſpeed to the place where he had ſeen him employed, at the moment George was riſing the ſecond time;—ſnatching off his coat with an almoſt inperceptible motion, he ruſhed into the water, fearleſs of danger (though no great ſwimmer) juſt time enough to ſave him from an untimely death, as he was ſinking the laſt time. Catching hold of him, he threw him over his ſhoulder, ſo as to keep his head above the water, holding him with his left hand, whilſt with his right he made his way towards the lawn, gaining the ſhore juſt in time to ſave them both; for, exhauſted by the violent exertions he had made, and overcome by his fears for his favourite's ſafety, he ſunk ſenſeleſs on the graſs!

Soon recovering, the firſt object of his thoughts was poor George, who, when he fainted, had fallen from his ſhoulder by his ſide. Having evacuated a great quantity of water, occaſioned by the ſudden ſhock, he was now ſhewing ſigns of returning life, Andrew leaning over him pale as any ſpectre,

when Sir Charles, who had come out with the intention of warning his ſon to return home, arrived at the critical ſpot. Almoſt bereaved of his ſenſes by beholding his ſon in ſuch a dreadful condition, he had ſcarce power ſufficient to aſk the fatal occaſion of it. Andrew was ſtill leſs able to anſwer interrogatories; but collecting as many of his deſerted ſenſes as he could, to relieve his maſter's viſible anxiety, he told him in nearly the ſame words as I have before related it.

Sir Charles, ſtooping down, had the ineffable ſatisfaction of finding that Andrew had, by chafing his hands and temples, reſtored the circulation of the blood; and ordering him to return to the Lodge to break it gently to Lady Belmont, and get his ſon's bed warmed, ſaid he would carry him himſelf, and follow him.

Andrew, whilſt gently raiſing poor George, who was entirely wet through, the water running off his clothes in ſtreams as he lifted him from the ground, had the pleaſure to hear him heave a deep ſigh, and

ſee

ſee him once open his eyes. Placing him in the arms of his father, he affectionately preſſed his young maſter's hand, and walked to the Lodge as faſt as he could, or rather as faſt as his trembling limbs would carry him; for they once or twice nearly refuſed to do their office. The firſt perſon he encountered was, very fortunately, Sally; and telling her ſhe muſt directly, without aſking any queſtions, take a good pan of coals, and warm his young maſter's bed, ſhe did as ſhe was deſired; though I would not have anſwered for her implicit obedience, had not Andrew's appearance, with the water dripping from his clothes, ſomewhat ſatisfied her inſatiable curioſity by giving her a clue to gueſs the reſt; which the orders he gave confirming her in, ſhe did not heſitate to ſet about it immediately.

The timid mind of faint-hearted Superſtition could not have diſcovered more fear when walking in a church-yard alone at the terrific, dreadful, terrible, awe-inſpiring hour of twelve at night! when expecting, (if not fancying) an actual ſpectre riſing from

from the grave, where long ſince its mouldering form had mingled with its native clay—than was now expreſſed in the countenance of Anthony, who, upon hearing Andrew ſpeak in a faint tone of voice, had come to ſee what was the matter; but ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at his pallid face, lifting up his hands in the attitude of ſurpriſe, he exclaimed—

"Where, in the name of wonder, have you been, Andrew?"

"Been, Anthony! why, not in the pleaſanteſt place in the world; but it is well it was no worſe; and if you will lead me to my Lady, you ſhall hear, for I am afraid my own legs will not carry me."

They now entered the apartment where Lady Belmont was ſitting at the harpſichord, and the lovely Anna in a little chair amuſing herſelf with a wax-doll. She was a beautiful, intereſting little creature, between eight and nine years old; but as I doubt the ſtrength of the imagination of my readers in conceiving the idea of ſuch perfect beauty in ſo young a child, I ſhall

aid

aid it by a deſcription. She was very ſlim, and for her age exceeding tall, being nearly the ſame height as her brother, who was two years older, with a form the moſt unexceptionable. Her eyes blue, expreſſive, ſoft, and tender; and though ſo young, the ſuſceptibility of her feeling ſoul often impearled them with the gem of pity. Her noſe was aquiline, her mouth ſmall and beautiful, and a complexion which might have vied with, if not rivalled, alabaſter; ſo beautifully clear, that the blood might be diſtinguiſhed circulating through her cerulean veins: whilſt her face, which Beauty had touched with her bluſhing fingers, was half veiled by a profuſion of flaxen hair, that, jealous of expoſing ſo much beauty to the eyes of every beholder, becauſe they never failed to gaze upon it with admiration and delight, fell in luxuriant ringlets over her forehead and falling ſhoulders, thus ſhading the faireſt work of Nature from the public gaze of idle curioſity, knowing that when beauty is too often ſeen, or too much expoſed, admiration ceaſes,

and

and frequently ſinks into indifference, if not contempt.

Lady Belmont, at the ſight of poor Andrew, roſe from her inſtrument, and in the voice of humanity, which indiſcriminately feels for the ſufferings of every fellow-creature, enquired with tender concern the cauſe of his pale looks and wet apparel. After entreating her not to be alarmed, as there was now no danger, he ſatisfied her in every particular, as well as poor Anthony, who had ſtood on the verge of impatience till he finiſhed his recital.

Lady Belmont, though endowed with great ſenſibility, poſſeſſed at the ſame time an uncommon ſhare of fortitude and preſence of mind, which made her not forget to thank Andrew as the preſerver of her child at the evident riſk of his own life, putting at the ſame time five guineas into his hand as ſome recompence for the effectual and valuable ſervice he had rendered them.—But Andrew's greateſt failing was ſwearing, which he had contracted whilſt with his maſter at Oxford, from the wrong

notion

notion that it gave a man the look of a gentleman, and made him appear of more conſequence among his equals and inferiors. He was not mercenary, nor ever acted but from generous motives, which now made him nobly and obſtinately perſiſt in refuſing to accept it; adding, at the ſame time (to make his Lady decline offering it) with a noble ſelf-denial, which would have done even Demoſthenes credit, by refuſing that praiſe which a generous mind will always beſtow on a generous action—"That he did not deſerve to be thanked, as he thought only of pleaſing himſelf when he ſaved him; for he was too fond of his dear young maſter to be happy without him."—Lady Belmont, unable to prevail upon him to accept her offered bounty, returned it with reluctance into her pocket, and adviſed Andrew to go to bed, and take a cordial which ſhe preſcribed. He could not, however, be perſuaded to do any thing elſe than to put on dry clothing, and to drink a glaſs of brandy to prevent taking cold.

Sir

Sir Charles now entered the apartment with George in his arms, who had ſufficiently recovered to recognize thoſe around him; but was ſtill unable to ſpeak, and appeared quite inſenſible of the cauſe of his preſent indiſpoſition, as well as to the manner in which he had eſcaped from danger.

Lady Belmont, taking him from the arms of his father, and affectionately kiſſing his pale lips, that ſeemed already impreſſed with the ſeal of death, let fall a ſhower of tears into his boſom. This act of maternal love revived his chilled and drooping heart, by imparting that genial warmth, which, exciting the nerves to action, conveys the thin ſubtile fluid of animal ſpirits to every part of the body. A faint ſmile played upon his features, and produced a pale tinge of animation on his cheeks. Happy to ſee the purple tide of health again reverting to its proper channel in his expreſſive countenance, ſhe embraced him with tranſport; and changing his wet clothes for a warm night-dreſs, delivered him to his anxious father, who, carrying him up ſtairs,

gently

gently laid him on the bed which Sally had prepared for him.

Sir Charles and Lady Belmont, though dignified with titles, the favourites of Fortune, and not the laſt in the polite circles of faſhion, could nobly defy the ſatirical invectives of faſhionable levity in ſitting by the bedſide of a beloved child, and preſerving the ſtricteſt ſilence for fear of diſturbing him, till ſleep, the friend of virtue and innocence, conſigned him to repoſe.

Lady Belmont, in a ſoft whiſper, told Sir Charles of the noble behaviour of Andrew, in refuſing to accept of any pecuniary gratuity; remarking, at the ſame time, that ſuch a generous expanſion of ſoul as that of riſking his own exiſtence to ſave the life of a fellow-creature, who was not allied to him by any ties of conſanguinity, deſerved a reward, though ſhe knew not in what manner to beſtow it.

Sir Charles highly applauded his conduct; and, after conſidering ſome time, thought that

that the greateſt favour they could confer on him, as he was ſo very partial to their ſon, would be to take off his livery, and let him attend him when he went to the Univerſity, in the capacity of his gentleman.

Lady Belmont thought that might be the only means of obliging him, as he had often expreſſed a wiſh to be his young maſter's ſervant; and the agitation of her ſpirits having ſubſided, ſhe recollected ſhe had not ſeen Anna, and enquired of Sir Charles if he knew where ſhe was. He replied he had not obſerved her in the parlour, but would return to look for her.

Gently entering the apartment, he found her ſitting in the penſive attitude of infant ſorrow; her little chair was turned with the back of it towards the door, with one arm careleſsly thrown acroſs the top of it, which ſerved as a pillow for her head, whilſt the other hung by her ſide, holding her doll by the arm, which had never, till this fatal accident, been ſo much neglected.

He

He ſtopped in ſilent admiration of her elegant and intereſting figure. She ſighed; and raiſing her head from her arm, which was ſtill wet with the emblem of pity and affection, ſaid, "Poor George! he was ſo ill, he did not know his ſiſter Anna; and they all crowded round him ſo, that I could not get to kiſs him; therefore, if he dies, I ſhan't wiſh him good bye."

Sir Charles, raiſing his eyes to Heaven in gratitude for the bleſſings he enjoyed in ſuch an amiable family, advanced; and taking Anna in his arms, ſaid, "Your brother will not die, my little affectionate girl; no, God preſerves him to be the protector of his Anna."

"Does he though, papa?" ſaid Anna, throwing her arms round his neck, "how good he is! If he lets my dear George live to play with me, and take care of me, I am ſure, when I go to-bed, I will thank him in my prayers, and aſk him too to keep poor George from tumbling in the water again."

Sir Charles preſſed Anna to his heart; a gliſtening tear ſtood trembling in his eye;

a ſilent prayer was all he could then offer to Heaven for the preſervation of this tender bloſſom, which promiſed to be the faireſt flower of the Spring. His endeavours to repel the tear were in vain; it dropped upon the hand of the object which occaſioned it. Anna was going to wipe it off; but her intention was obſerved by the Angel of Mercy, who, taking it from her, bore it on the wings of gratitude to the celeſtial regions, and delivering it to the recording Angel, it was ſet down in large characters with his golden pen, under the title of "Sincere devotional Virtue."

Sir Charles now carried her to his Lady, and related the particulars of their converſation: ſhe tenderly embraced her, for Lady Belmont was ſo unfaſhionable as to be prouder of her children than a fine equipage. George, in his ſleep, now ſoftly whiſpered the name of Anna; the ſound vibrated on her ears. She exclaimed, "Oh, there! George, my dear George is thinking of me, papa! Don't you believe he thinks

thinks me very cruel for not ſpeaking to him?"

"No, my love," ſaid Lady Belmont, "he never could think ſo of his kind little Anna."

"Then what made him ſay my name in his ſleep, Mamma?"

George, who had awoke by her firſt exclamation, refreſhed by his nap, and nearly recovered, except a weakneſs, occaſioned by ſtruggling ſo long in the water, replied, "That he had been dreaming he had fallen into the river as he was trying to catch a large fiſh, and ſhe was going to jump in after him, ſo he called to her to ſtay behind.

Sir Charles looked upon Lady Belmont with a ſmile; but it was ſuch a ſmile that thoſe only can interpret who, like him, have taſted that refined ſtream of friendſhip, which, drained from the groſſer particles of paſſion, ſtill refines as it meanders through the ſcenes of pure delight ariſing from conjugal attachment.

Andrew, in the meantime, having pretty well recovered his ſtrength, returned to view the ſpot where Maſter George had ſo nearly loſt his life, and felt a ſecret ſatisfaction at having been the means of preſerving it. Perceiving ſomething move the water rather more than common, he walked on, and found his favourite's rod, which, by the line being entangled in a buſh that grew on the edge of the bank, had been prevented from floating down the river; and he now perceived that the float and line being dragged under the water at intervals, was the cauſe of the motion which attracted his attention. Taking the fiſhing-rod in his hand, he at length pulled out of the water the large pike which was the occaſion of George's misfortune; and which, by having ſwallowed the hook, was now expiring.

Sir Charles had juſt finiſhed informing his ſon how Andrew had ſaved him, when he entered the room with a diſh in his hands, containing the fiſh. Apologizing for his intruſion, he told them how he had found it, ſaying that he could not help coming

coming to ſhew his young maſter the cauſe of his accident. The ſight of the fiſh renewed the circumſtances of it in George's memory, and enabled him to give an accurate account of the whole affair; when turning towards Andrew, he expreſſed his warm and grateful acknowledgments for the ſervices he had rendered him, and told him he was to lay aſide his livery, and attend him to the Univerſity, as his gentleman, when he was fifteen years old.

This intelligence pleaſed Andrew more than any thing elſe could have done, as it gratified his wiſh in being near his young maſter, and flattered his vanity (though he was now eight-and-thirty), by enabling him to adorn his perſon in the habit of a gentleman; and thanking his maſter and miſtreſs in terms which his looks ſhewed were ſincere, made one of his humble bows; but collecting a ſpark of pride as he walked acroſs the room, from the idea that he ſhould be dreſſed like a gentleman, he withdrew with a majeſtic bend.

CHAP. VII.

GEORGE had now ſufficiently recovered to purſue his ſtudies with his father, and had already made great progreſs in the Latin and French languages, arithmetic, geography, aſtronomy, and the uſe of the globes. He was his conſtant companion in all his walks; for Sir Charles took great pleaſure in hearing his obſervations on the various works of Nature; correcting them, with parental tenderneſs, when they deviated from the ſtandard of judgment, and improving his underſtanding by laying open to his imagination the various purpoſes for which they were deſigned by Providence, and to which they are converted by man. He would liſten to his father's diſcourſes upon theſe ſubjects with great attention, nor ever ſeemed better pleaſed than when in the purſuit of knowledge; yet if Novelty happened

pened to croſs his path, all other game was immediately forgotten; for, in purſuit of her, there was no difficulty but he would ſurmount by perſeverance.

This love of novelty made his parents tremble for his future welfare;—at preſent it only made him ſeek the ſociety of thoſe whoſe characteriſtic features were diſtinguiſhed from the common race of mankind by any marked peculiarity; yet even if this was purſued as his paſſions gained ſtrength, it might lead him to commit many follies, by introducing him into the company of his inferiors either in virtue, merit, or underſtanding.

The ſeeds of virtue, which had been planted by the careful hand of maternal affection in the tender boſom of the lovely Anna, grew up like a beautiful plant under the hands of a ſkilful gardener; which, if one exuberant ſhoot branched out, was immediately lopped off by the hand of care—whilſt George reſembled a fine field-flower, which attracts the admiration of every paſſenger, but loſes half its value in the

eyes of the connoiſſeur, from its too luxuriant growth, or the too deep dye of its colours. So oppoſite were the characters of theſe two lovely relations, that, whilſt George was diſtinguiſhed by his drollery and vivacity, Anna was called by the Curate (who was a conſtant viſiter at the Lodge) the penſive queen of ſorrow;—but I cannot think her pretenſions to the title were ſubſtantial; for her beautiful countenance was generally illumined with a ſmile, though, from its calm ſerenity, you might have ſuppoſed it the attribute of content.

The time was now faſt approaching that was fixed on by Sir Charles and Lady Belmont for ſending George to the Univerſity; and he was looking forward, with all the impatience of youth, to the appointed day that was to tranſport him from the ſcenes of his tendereſt infancy, not thinking that there is more happineſs in anticipation than in preſent enjoyment.

The long-expected day came at laſt; and George, who had ſcarcely cloſed his eyes the preceding night, was up and dreſſed before

any of the family were ſtirring; he employed the intermediate time in adjuſting his things, which he intended to take with him, when his patience, which was almoſt exhauſted, was relieved by the bell ſummoning him to breakfaſt. He joyfully attended the pleaſing ſummons, and ſkipping down ſtairs, entered the breakfaſt-parlour, where Sir Charles, Lady Belmont, and Anna were already aſſembled. Andrew, who was now dreſſed in his character to attend his young maſter, placed him a chair by his ſiſter's.

George ſmiled at his new ſervant, who had now uſurped the place of Anthony; but ſeating himſelf in the chair, he drew it cloſer to his ſiſter Anna's, who was now entering her thirteenth year. She was too much affected at the thoughts of parting with a brother tenderly beloved, and whom ſhe had never before been ſeparated from, to partake of the meal before her. Sir Charles, obſerving ſhe did not touch any thing on the table, ſaid, "I am afraid my dear Anna's ſuſceptible heart has ſtole away her appetite this morning." She would wil-

lingly have returned an anſwer; but, conſcious that her trembling voice would betray her feelings, ſhe contented herſelf with returning a ſlight bow.

Sorry to be the occaſion of her ſorrow, but in too high ſpirits at the thoughts of enjoying the ſociety of ſo many young men as he ſhould meet with at Oxford, to let any thing chagrin him long, George ſaid—

"I hope, my dear Anna, you are not ſorry at parting with your troubleſome brother; for I am going into ſo much good company, I can ſcarcely return the compliment, unleſs it be at the expence of my veracity."

"I am only afraid your good company will make you forget a ſiſter, George, who can never forget you," ſaid Anna, whilſt a ſilent tear trickled down her cheek.

"Oh! do not cry," ſaid George, "to make me ſorry for what I have been ſaying; but to forget you, is quite impoſſible, upon my word and integrity."

"I hope you will never forfeit either, George," ſaid Sir Charles; "for if they be once blemiſhed, you will inſtantly loſe the eſteem

of every good man, and yet, to preſerve them, will require your utmoſt care; for I am very much afraid your volatile diſpoſition will lead you to ſeek the ſociety of thoſe young men who, from having very little principle themſelves, make it an eſtabliſhed rule to ridicule merit in others, when, by ingratiating themſelves into your favour, which is very probable, if endowed with any ſingularity of character, they may have ſuch influence over your principles as to lead you from the paths of rectitude and honour, and, by their pernicious doctrines, blaſt all my hopes, with the fair plant which I have taken ſo much pains and labour to rear for the ſpace of fifteen years."

"Depend upon it, my dear Sir," ſaid George, haſtily riſing, and taking his father's hand, reſpectfully preſſing it to his boſom, and bending over it in the graceful poſition of filial affection, "depend upon it, though I may have given ſufficient cauſe to excite your fears, I will never be guilty of ſo much ingratitude as not to bear fruit to reward the trouble of the labourer."

"That was nobly ſaid, my dear fellow," ſaid Sir Charles; "and I ſhould be unjuſt any longer to entertain ſuſpicions of its fertility."

"My worthy boy will never ceaſe to merit the affections of his family, and the eſteem of his friends," ſaid Lady Belmont, "nor ever chuſe a College friend but he may introduce with honour at Belmont Lodge."

"Never, my dear Madam," rejoined George, emphatically.

The chaiſe, which was to convey Sir Charles and George from the houſe, as he intended to accompany his ſon to Oxford, drew up to the door.

Lady Belmont now claſped her ſon in her arms, when Anna, advancing, was affectionately ſaluted by her brother, who, again bidding a laſt adieu, followed his father to the chaiſe, which immediately drove off, attended by Andrew only.

Anna withdrew with her mother after breakfaſt into the ſtudy, where the mornings were always ſpent in improving her gentle mind, and ſtrengthening her judgment; and ſhe now endeavoured, by purſuing

ing her ſearch after knowledge with more than uſual aſſiduity, to forget the parting with her brother. But an involuntary ſigh would frequently recal the retroceding tear, and, by banithing the placid ſmile that was accuſtomed to play in wanton dimples round her mouth, diffuſe ſo ſoft a ſhade of penſive melancholy, that, had you ſeen her, you muſt have miſtaken her for the Goddeſs of Pity, ſent by Heaven to viſit this terraqueous globe, in order to compaſſionate the miſeries of mortals.

At the expiration of three weeks a carriage ſtopped at the gates of the Lodge, and Sir Charles alighted. On opening the door of the apartment that was generally occupied by the family, he found Lady Belmont reading, whilſt Anna was performing a leſſon on the lute, which ſhe played with great ſkill and judgment.

The meeting was a joyful one on all ſides, as Lady Belmont and Anna did not expect him to return till the commencement of the next week, as he had told them he ſhould make a month's ſtay in the metropolis, that he might have an opportunity of

ſhewing

ſhewing George the different buildings, and places of public diverſion, before he went to the Univerſity.

Mutual congratulations being over, Sir Charles told them that George's ſpirits were ſo much depreſſed the firſt day's journey, that he could ſcarcely make him notice the various views and gentlemen's ſeats as they paſſed them.—"But his vivacity was quite reſtored the ſecond day," added Sir Charles, "for his obſervations were made with ſuch ſucceſſive rapidity, that he left me no leiſure to return an anſwer to any of his interrogatories."

"Being unaccuſtomed as he was to travelling," ſaid Lady Belmont, "was he not fatigued with his long journey?"

"He did not appear ſo in the leaſt," rejoined Sir Charles; "for, after dining at an hotel, he walked with me to the Temple to ſee my friend Mordaunt."

"Were I not afraid of being laughed at for my impertinent curioſity," ſaid Anna, who had hitherto maintained perfect ſilence, "I ſhould enquire the ſignification of my dear father's ſmile."

"I could

"I could not think my dear Anna poſſeſſed ſo much," replied Sir Charles; "but ſince I find ſhe does not entirely refuſe the enjoyments and prerogatives which characterize the female ſex, I will anſwer her queſtion by another; that is, "Did ſhe know Mr. Mordaunt had tied the Hymeneal knot?"

"Married!" exclaimed Lady Belmont—"Mr. Mordaunt married!"

Sir Charles ſmiled, ſaying, "When I enquired for him at his chambers in the Temple, the ſervant replied he had company. I then ſent in my name. My friend immediately came out to receive me; and ſhaking me cordially by the hand, with kind enquiries at the ſame time after my family, aſked the occaſion of my journey. Satisfying him in this particular, I introduced him to the cauſe of it, whom he was pleaſed to compliment very highly; when turning to me again, he hoped to have the pleaſure of introducing me to Mrs. Mordaunt. Recollecting I had heard him mention his mother, and not doubting but that he meant

meant the old lady from Devonſhire, I readily aſſented to his propoſition;—but gueſs my aſtoniſhment, on entering the dining-room, to find this imaginary old lady converted into the youngeſt of your two bride-maids, nurſing a fine baby between two or three months old."

"I thought," ſaid Lady Belmont, "that my cup of bleſſings, adminiſtered by Happineſs, was much too full to admit of any addition; but this pleaſing intelligence of my friend's transformation from the lively girl to the affectionate mother, has infuſed ſo ſweet a potion, that I am juſtified in ſaying it now runs over with felicity."

"Convinced that there is nothing ſo grateful to the ſympathizing heart of friendſhip," ſaid Sir Charles, "as the knowledge of the happineſs of the beloved object which creates that amiable ſentiment, I knew my information would pleaſe my Anna, whoſe generous, ſenſitive boſom is the repoſitory of every virtue."

"You are an unfaſhionable Eccentricity!" replied Lady Belmont, "to perſiſt in flattering

tering your wife ſixteen years after marriage; you would actually incur the cenſure of every votary of rank and fortune in London, could they hear you."

"I ſhould entertain a very indifferent opinion of their powers of diſcrimination, my dear Madam, if they could be ſo abſurd," ſaid Anna. "But pray, my dear papa, how did George like London and Oxford?"

"He admired London very much, my love, and was quite enchanted with the Opera-houſe, Theatres, &c. &c. but was, nevertheleſs, ſo very anxious to reach Oxford, that he intreated me to quit the metropolis a week earlier than I intended, and laſt Monday I left him happy and delighted at College."

The converſation was now terminated by Anthony entering the room to acquaint them that ſupper was on table; but as I am not upon ſuch intimate terms with this amiable family as will authorize me to intrude upon them, unaſked, at ſuch unſeaſonable hours, I am compelled to forego the pleaſure of their company.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

ANNA, who was now arrived at thoſe years when the judgment, refining, riſes ſuperior to the delights of puerile amuſements, and ſtill led on by ſtrengthening reaſon, leaves the mind at liberty to reflect on the ſubſtantial and permanent advantages which accrue from a liberal education, and the mental pleaſures which ariſe from impreſſing the tender, ductile mind of infancy with the ſeal of every virtue, now applied herſelf to ſtudy with ſuch intenſe application and cloſe attendance, varying only her more abſtruſe ſtudies with the polite and elegant accompliſhments, that ſhe could not fail to make a very rapid progreſs in every branch of ſcience.

Sir Charles and Lady Belmont had formerly agreed to ſend Anna, when ſhe had attained her fifteenth year, to ſome eminent boarding-ſchool in the environs of London, that

that ſhe might be attended by the beſt maſters, as it was totally impoſſible to procure any at ſo great a diſtance from the metropolis. But this idea was now entirely forgotten; for to live ſeparated from both of their deſerving children was an inſurmountable difficulty with Sir Charles and Lady Belmont, who preferred their ſociety to any other;—beſides, it could not be conceived neceſſary to ſend her to ſchool, as ſhe could ſpeak the French and Italian languages with great fluency and elegance of expreſſion, and her own language perfectly, as well as being well verſed in the hiſtories of Rome and England, and a perfect miſtreſs of the lute and harpſichord, though the former was her favourite inſtrument. Painting ſhe was the leaſt partial to, though the landſcapes ſhe deſigned were executed with taſte. It was therefore agreed that Lady Belmont, who had received a very ſuperior education from the generality of the female ſex, ſhould ſtill continue inſtructing her in the above-mentioned art and ſciences, whilſt her father

father would dedicate part of every day to teach her the ſciences of geography and aſtronomy.

Anna was ſincerely happy when this reſolution paſſed into a decree; and her lovely countenance again reſumed the ſmile of content, whilſt her lute was heard to warble in its ſweeteſt ſtrains of melodious harmony, joining its mellow tones in concert with the grateful inhabitants of the air, that, ſheltered by benevolence from oppreſſion, lodged, ſecure of reſt and quiet, in the adjoining wood.

There never was a happier trio than now reſided at Belmont Lodge; every boſom was the ſeat of happineſs; every look defined ſatisfaction;—no wiſh was expreſſed beyond preſent enjoyment, unleſs it might be for the return of George. The mornings were ſpent in the ſtudy, till the bell at two o'clock warned them to retire to dreſs for dinner;—the afternoons were occupied either in walking over the grounds, viſiting the villagers, and affording relief to the ſick or indigent; in ſhort excurſions on the Severn,

Severn, or in riding out on horſeback to view the neighbouring gentlemen's ſeats.

They had been ſtrolling over the eſtate one afternoon, obſerving more minutely the great variety of beauties with which it abounded, when they arrived at a delightful little eminence on the banks of the river Severn, nearly encloſed with woodbines and ſweetbriar, and ſhaded by a venerable oak. Charmed with its ſituation, Anna aſcended it; it commanded an extenſive and enchanting proſpect over the ſurrounding country, and a view of the Severn for ſome miles. A tear of ſenſibility bedewed her eye, which was the index of her feeling heart, and rendered every thought legible; it broke through the ſilken bonds of ſlavery, in gratitude to that Providence who, with ſuch unlimited munificence, had ornamented the reſidence of man with every thing conducive to his pleaſure, eaſe, and comfort.

"How charming," exclaimed Anna, "would be a little ruſtic temple raiſed on this enchanting ſpot, where the views of the country, diverſified with ſuch ſcenery, in general

general ſo well fertilized, excite ſuch exalted ideas!"

"I entirely coincide with your opinion," ſaid Lady Belmont, "my dear Anna, and compliment you on your taſte; for you have certainly choſen the moſt beautiful ſpot of ground the eſtate can afford, for a building of the ruſtic order."

"I have often thought it a great pity," replied Sir Charles, "that Belmont could not boaſt of one temporary ſhelter from a ſudden ſtorm; ſo to pleaſe the philanthropic heart, and excellent underſtanding of my charming girl, which teaches her to look with admiration on the various works of Nature, I will immediately employ the neceſſary workmen, provided ſhe will furniſh me with a plan."

"You are very kind, my dear Sir," ſaid Anna, "by ſo generouſly acceding to my wiſhes. The plan I had formed in my imagination was a thatched roof, built in an hemiſpherical form, ſupported by a colonade of pillars, which, inſtead of being ſtone, or marble, I deſigned to be the trunks of elm trees, as

nearly

nearly equal in ſize as it was poſſible to procure them; the intercolumnial ſpaces to have been filled up with a partition; the upper half only made to ſlide down, leaving one ſpace open next the lawn, as an entrance, entirely covering the under half of the partition, on the outſide, with the woodbine and ſweetbriar. I then intended to paint the upper half, on the outſide, green, and to have it ſtuccoed on the inſide, interſperſing it with ſome ſhells and moſs; and after having ſo far completed it, to have rendered it perfect by the addition of a green chair, and a marble ſlab."

"You are a very tolerable architect, Anna," ſaid Sir Charles; "and if the plan meets with Lady Belmont's approbation, I will immediately put it in execution, by ordering Anthony to engage the proper artificers."

"I approve it very much," ſaid Lady Belmont; "but how long may it be, Anna, ſince you ſketched the plan?"

"Laſt Wedneſday, my dear Madam," ſaid Anna; "invited by the calm ſerenity of the

the moon-light evening, I took up my lute, and ſtrayed to this eminence. I had ſcarcely viſited it before, and, till then, never admired the charming proſpects it commands. I played a leſſon on my lute, which the echo of the neighbouring hills repeated with ſo ſoft a cadence, that I could almoſt fancy other inſtruments anſwering mine. The idea then croſſed my imagination, whether the ſound of the lute would produce the ſame effect if it were confined to an apartment; and it was this conception of my mind that ſuggeſted the idea and plan of the thatched houſe."

"It is very naturally accounted for," rejoined Sir Charles; "but I fancy we had better think of returning, as the ſun is now reflecting its laſt effulgent rays on the windows of the Lodge, and the dew on the graſs renders it unwholeſome, and imprudent to continue out after it has ſet."——

As moſt of the materials for building were brought from a very conſiderable diſtance, the thatched-houſe was ſcarcely completed before the expiration of two months; but at the end of that period it was finiſhed exactly

correſpondent

correſpondent to the plan propoſed by Anna. The eminence which, before the alteration, was nearly perpendicular, was now carried, by an eaſy and gradual deſcent, to a long viſta of trees, which terminated in a little coppice. The honey-ſuckles and jeſſamines, that had been tranſplanted from the garden, were now nailed, in an eaſy manner, round the outſide, ſo as to give it the appearance of nature, inſtead of art, by the gardener, who alſo planted with the hand of taſte, on the ſummit, and down its ſloping velvet ſides, ſome very beautiful ſhrubs and flowers, which gave it an elegant and romantic appearance.

Anna ſpent the greater part of her leiſure hours in this delightful receſs, exhauſting her ſtores of fancy and invention to beautify the interior. The roof was ſpread over with ſhells of various colours, ſizes, and deſcriptions, adjuſted with ſo nice and elegant a proportion, as to diſplay the delicacy of her fancy and judgment; the intermediate ſpaces being filled up with froſts of every colour. The upper part of the partition, which was always puſhed down in the day time, was ornamented

in the ſame manner as the roof; and the gliſtening froſts that reflected and refracted the different rays of light as they darted on them, gave the whole building a brilliant and ſplendid appearance.

She had juſt completed eight beautiful artificial wreaths of lilies and roſes, that had been a work of time, and was hanging them from the roof in feſtoons, between the pillars which ſupported it, when Sally, panting for breath, and tears in her eyes, approached, ſaying, "Oh, my dear young lady! the moſt dreadfulleſt accident! Heigh-ho!"

"What accident?" aſked Anna, eagerly; "what is the matter, Sally?"

"Oh! 'tis the moſt ſhockingeſt, miſerableſt 'venture!" ſaid Sally, ſobbing, and wiping her eyes with the corner of her checked apron.—"Oh! Madam, 'tis worſer than any thing that's happened ſince young Mr. Belmont fell into the water!"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Anna, changing countenance, "I hope it is not a ſimilar accident!"

"Smile

"Smile at the accident, Me'm? God forbid!" ſaid Mrs. Sally; "but I believes every body loved Mr. Curate too much to laugh when he fell into a fit. Beſides, poor gentleman, he was very kind to ſarvants, and often ſlipped a piece of ſilver into their hands, when he uſed to leave the Lodge, to go home after ſupper."

"Well," ſaid Anna, in a voice rendered tremulous by the exquiſite ſenſibility of her feelings, "but it may not be too late to afford him aſſiſtance."

"Oh! Me'm,—death, as Mr. Andrew uſed to ſay, would not ſtay, but carried him off whilſt he was laying on the ground."

Mrs. Sally, making her obeiſance, now returned to the Lodge; whilſt poor Anna, overcome by ſurpriſe and ſorrow at the ſudden intelligence, was almoſt void of ſenſe or motion, till a friendly ſhower of tears came to her relief, when, riſing from her ſeat, ſhe proceeded towards the houſe with a heavy heart, and the lucid pearl of pity gliſtening in either eye.

On entering the parlour, ſhe was addreſſed by Sir Charles, who was very much affected at loſing his friend, ſaying—

"Here is a leſſon of mortality, my dear Anna, in the ſudden and unexpected death of one of the worthieſt of men, which affords us a ſtriking example of the frailty of human exiſtence; for the Curate, who, though advanced in years, was ſeemingly in the full enjoyment of health, has, without a ſtruggle, ſunk into the peaceful arms of Death."

"Life is the fraileſt flower that blows," added Lady Belmont; "for juſt as we have raiſed it in deſpite of ſickneſs, or the ſtorms of adverſity, there comes a chilling blaſt, and withers it to the root."

"Your deſcription is pathetically beautiful, my love," rejoined Sir Charles; "yet, if we would allow ourſelves to be guided by reaſon, inſtead of uſeleſs affliction, which only enervates the mind, and renders it incapable of ſtruggling to overcome the misfortunes that aſſail us in every ſtage of our journey through life, we ſhould not regret the departure of a man, who, from having conſtantly purſued

purſued the undeviating tracks of truth, honour, and integrity, was thoroughly prepared to meet Death, whenever he might ſummon him to appear before the tribunal of his Maker; and whoſe exit (conſidered as intereſting himſelf only) was certainly an enviable one, ſince he had no relatives to inherit his property, no friends (ourſelves excepted) to bemoan his loſs, nor any endearing ties of conjugal attachment to bind his affections to this life."

"I will agree, my dear Sir," ſaid Anna, "that if we give ourſelves leiſure to reflect, his death may be conſidered in the light you place it, not only as enviable, but acceptable; but a moderate flow of ſorrow, ſpringing from the ſource of affection or eſteem, to conſecrate his grave, I look upon as a juſt tribute due to his memory, and to the loſs of the many virtues he inherited."

"You are in the right, my charming logician," replied Sir Charles; "a moderate flow of ſorrow is juſtifiable. Indeed it is the ſacrifice humanity demands at the ſhrine of philanthropic benevolence."

"Do you know, Sir Charles; whether any one has been promiſed the Curacy at Mr. Truelove's deceaſe?" Lady Belmont enquired.

"Yes," replied Sir Charles; "a very worthy young man, of the name of Percival Edwin, has been appointed to ſucceed him; as the Curate, from his very advanced age, was not ſuppoſed to fulfil the neceſſary duties much longer, at leaſt without the aid of an aſſiſtant."

In the courſe of the next week, the Curate was interred in the aiſle of the village church, followed by the Belmont family, and all the villagers. A monument of Parian marble, pure as his morals, but ſimple as his manners, was erected to his memory by Sir Charles Belmont, who inſcribed it with an epitaph worthy of the deceaſed!

As he died inteſtate, and unallied by conſanguinity to human kind, Sir Charles diſtributed his clothes and linen amongſt the villagers. Much money he was too humane to be poſſeſſed of; but what Sir Charles found, he preſented to the ſervant, who had grown

old

old in her master's service, as a recompence for her fidelity, leaving the household furniture to the next possessor.

CHAP. IX.

FOUR years had now elapsed, with very little variation at Belmont, excepting the return of Mr. Belmont at the several vacations (now too old to be called George). But as he has yet another twelvemonth to remain at College, I cannot think of gratifying the curiosity of my female readers (which, I am convinced, is extended to its greatest extremity), by describing an engaging young man of a prepossessing appearance, and so forth; or yet be so insufferably presumptuous as to raise the envy of the lords of the creation, by delineating a more perfect being than themselves.

Lady Belmont now declined instructing her daughter, with the approbation of Sir

Charles, as her intellectual ſenſe, and ripened judgment, rendered farther tuition entirely unneceſſary;—for Anna, educated by an accompliſhed woman, whoſe parental care conducted her through the intricate labyrinths of learning (that ſo frequently impede the progreſs of inexperienced youth, whoſe diffidence, timidity, or elſe their volatility, make them ſhrink at the very mention of difficulties, and retrocede at the firſt ſight of any obſtacle which requires a very ſmall ſhare of perſeverance to ſurmount), now anſwered the fondeſt expectations of her partial parents, who could not even encourage a remote wiſh to ſee her more perfect than ſhe was.

She was juſt turned of ſeventeen, rather taller than the generality of females; majeſtic in her appearance, which, at a trifling diſtance, inſpired her beholders with awe;—but that ſentiment was immediately exchanged for one much ſofter, at the ſight of her beautiful penſive countenance: but even that ſentiment was blended with ſuch an indefinable ſenſation, that to have tinged her cheeks with a ſingle bluſh would have inſtantly

ſtantly reflected remorſe in the countenance of the aggreſſor.

Percival Edwin (the new Curate, as he was diſtinguiſhed by Anthony), whom Sir Charles introduced to the family, was now as conſtant a viſiter as the late Mr. Truelove had been. He was a young man, whoſe parents died when he was but twelve years old; but a rich uncle, commiſerating his friendleſs ſtate, ſent him to Weſtminſter School, and afterwards to Cambridge, where, taking orders, he was preferred to the preſent Curacy. His character was irreproachable, his morals untainted by the profligacy of the times. His heart was the ſeat of benevolence and humanity; but ill-judging Fortune reſtricted his power of exerciſing thoſe virtues to a very limited boundary by her ſcanty and inadequate pittance. It was the knowledge of his misfortunes which made him reſpected by Sir Charles, and always ſecured him a ſincere welcome, and a ſeat at the table of plenty; for Sir Charles did not think the unfortunate beneath his notice, like too many of the pampered ſons of Fortune, who, if

they do condeſcend to look at them, it is only to gratify their inſatiable vanity and inhuman feelings, by treating them with ſupercilious ſcorn, or proud contempt; who, ſometimes, not even contented with that unjuſt behaviour, will vent the bittereſt ſarcaſms to grate the delicate, ſuſceptible feelings of the children of Adverſity, when they know that they are not in a ſituation to reſent it.

No, Sir Charles was one of thoſe few merciful beings who take humanity for their guide to conduct them to the hovels of adverſity, whoſe heart, expanded by a liberal education, was ſenſible of no greater ſatisfaction than in healing the cankered wound inflicted by misfortune, infuſing into it the aſſuaging lenitive of pity! And could he relax the ſaddened features of diſtreſs, contracted by grief, into a peaceful ſmile, he felt more intellectual delight, more mental ſatisfaction, than if, by ſome ſudden and unexpected evolution of fortune, he had been put in the poſſeſſion of innumerable riches.

This was the cauſe, united with the innate worth and integrity of Percival Edwin, that endeared

endeared him to the heart of Sir Charles:—and Percival, always received with pleaſure by the family, and delighted with their cultivated underſtanding and refined converſation, was never ſo well ſatisfied as when in their ſociety. He would read aloud to them ſome amuſing and inſtructive author, whilſt they were employed round the table of induſtry; attend them in their walks, delighting them with his intereſting converſation, and ſeldom failed making one of the party when they rode round the environs of Belmont; and, in ſhort, every leiſure moment that he could ſpare from the duties of his vocation, was ſpent at the Lodge; till Sir Charles became ſo accuſtomed to his company, ſo partial to his ſociety, that he never appeared ſatisfied but when he was preſent, nor ever ſat down to table without firſt enquiring for young Percival.

Lady Belmont and Anna, having a piece of fancy work which they wiſhed to complete, were one day very buſily employed, when Sir Charles, addreſſing Percival, aſked him, as the ladies were too much engaged to

amuſe them with their converſation, whether he would have any objection to a ride?"

Could we, with a taliſmanic power, explore the ſecret and inmoſt receſſes of the heart, and, aided by its magic art, purſue imagination through the intricate, perplexed, and entangled mazes of that collection of organs and veſſels infolded in the pericranium, from whence ariſe ſenſation and underſtanding, we might, perhaps, find out that Percival would have been much better pleaſed with his preſent ſituation; but not knowing how to refuſe the wiſh of Sir Charles, half implied in the queſtion, he aſſented to the propoſal.

The horſes were inſtantly prepared by Anthony, who always attended his maſter; when the gentlemen, wiſhing the ladies a good afternoon, mounted them, and rode off.

A gentle refreſhing zephyr ſpringing from the ſouth-weſt counteracted the heat of the ſun; and time, beguiled by ſocial, intereſting converſe, vaniſhed with a rapid, but imperceptible motion. They had proceeded

ceeded about eight miles, and were juſt thinking of returning, when they were accoſted by an old woman, the true repreſentative of wretchedneſs and miſery, who told them that a carriage had overturned at the bottom of the hill with two gentlemen in it, and that one of the horſes was killed on the ſpot. Percival threw a ſhilling at her feet; Sir Charles followed his example, and gave her half-a-crown. The former ſighed at the ſcanty allowance of Fortune that would not enable him to diſpenſe his charity with a hand of equal liberality. The poor woman implored Heaven to ſhower down its choiceſt bleſſings on their "Honours," who, clapping ſpurs to their horſes, flew with that ſwiftneſs which Humanity always lends her votaries to aid a fellow-creature in diſtreſs.

Deſcending the hill, they perceived a coach overturned, as the poor woman had deſcribed; one footman, in a blue and ſilver livery, holding his comrade's horſe, who was employed in ſupporting a gentleman at a little diſtance, and wiping

the

the blood from his face, which appeared as if cut by the glaſs, whilſt the other gentleman and the two poſtilions were endeavouring to raiſe the carriage. They diſmounted from their horſes, giving them to Anthony, when Sir Charles went to aſſiſt in raiſing the carriage, and Percival to afford his aſſiſtance to the wounded gentleman.

He found him rather faint from loſs of blood; but dipping his handkerchief in a little ſtream which ran by the ſide of the road, he wiped the blood from his face, which he found iſſued from a wound near the temple. Happy to find it no worſe, he ſcraped ſome lint from his handkerchief, and applied it to the wound on his forehead, binding it down with the handkerchief.

The gentleman, in polite terms, expreſſed his ſenſe of the obligation he lay under to Mr. Edwin, and begged to be informed to whoſe humanity he was ſo much indebted. Percival, preſenting his card with a graceful bow, begged he would not mention it; and helping him to riſe, with the aſſiſtance of the ſervant, they conducted him to the carriage,

riage, which was now raiſed by the aid of Sir Charles and the three ſurviving horſes placed in it, one of the ſervants being diſpatched to the next village to procure a cart to carry away the dead one. Sir Charles preſſingly invited them to return with him to Belmont Lodge; but they excuſed themſelves by ſaying the urgency of their buſineſs neceſſitated them to proceed with as much ſpeed as poſſible, when returning their grateful acknowledgments to Sir Charles and Percival for their friendly aſſiſtance, they took a polite leave, and proceeded on their journey.

Sir Charles and Percival, ſatisfied with having exerciſed the duties of Chriſtianity, mounted their horſes, and returned to Belmont, which they did not reach (ſo much had they been delayed by the accident, till night had veiled the heavens in a ſober grey.

Mr. Edwin viſited Belmont rather earlier than uſual the next morning; and finding Anna alone in the parlour practiſing on the lute, ſaid—

"I am

"I am afraid, Miſs Belmont, my repeated and unſeaſonable viſits will entitle me to the appellation of an intruder on the retirement of female excellence."

"I fear," replied Anna, with a ſerious ſmile, "that the conduct of Mr. Edwin is tinctured with flattery."

"Pray retract that ſentence," ſaid Percival, "you do not know how much you injure me by ſo palpable a miſconception; for, inſtead of the ſhape of a ſycophant, I aſſume the form of Truth to draw away the veil of diffidence that obſtructs Miſs Belmont's ſight, in order that ſhe may as eaſily diſtinguiſh her own tranſcendent merit as thoſe who have the honour of being acquainted with her."

"You pay your compliments ſo quick," ſaid Anna, "that you leave me no leiſure to reimburſe you, even if I poſſeſſed the ability; ſo, if you pleaſe, I will ſend for Lady Belmont to acquit me of the debts you have made me contract againſt my inclination."

Without

Without waiting for an anſwer, ſhe roſe and pulled the bell, which was ſoon anſwered by Anthony, whom ſhe deſired to acquaint Lady Belmont that Mr. Edwin was come.

"You were ſo precipitate in your acts and intentions, Ma'am," ſaid Percival, "that I did not perceive them time enough to prevent you ſending to Lady Belmont; but I ſhall be extremely ſorry if I am the occaſion of preventing her from purſuing any employment ſhe may be engaged in.

Before Anna had an opportunity to reply, Lady Belmont entered, and apologized for not appearing ſooner. The neceſſary compliments were ſcarcely over, when Sir Charles came in; but as the converſation changed to the adventures of the preceding evening, I ſhall not take the trouble to recite it, as the reader is acquainted with every particular occurrence.

A ride was now propoſed before dinner by Sir Charles, and the motion was ſtrongly ſupported by Mr. Edwin. Anna wiſhed to decline going, but ſhe knew Lady Belmont would not diſpenſe with her ſociety; and convinced

convinced that, whatever reaſons ſhe alledged to ſtay at home, would be overruled by the company, ſhe withdrew, without making any objections to the propoſition, to put on her habit.

Entering her dreſſing-room, ſhe began to reflect on the converſation which had paſſed between her and Percival in the former part of the morning. "What could he mean by complimenting me ſo highly?" thought Anna; "though, to be ſure, an indifferent perſon might have made uſe of ſimilar language on finding me alone; but then his looks ſeemed to imply much more ſignification than his words conveyed. I hope he does not—" Here ſhe was interrupted by Sally telling her Lady Belmont was waiting; ſo, without concluding her ſoliloquy, ſhe tripped down ſtairs.

Her dark blue habit and black beaver hat ſet off her blooming complexion to the greateſt advantage. Percival thought ſhe never appeared more beautiful, and could ſcarcely take his eyes off her lovely countenance, till Sir Charles, addreſſing her, ſaid—"We have been debating on the roads, Anna,

Anna, and know not which to purſue; we therefore unanimouſly agreed to leave the choice to you, as our umpire."

"You have choſen a very incompetent one to decide the controverſy, my dear Sir," replied Anna; "but ſince you have left it to my deciſion, ſuppoſe we trouble you to ſhew us the beauties of the country you ſo highly extolled laſt night."

The propoſition was immediately aſſented to; and Anthony bringing the horſes to the gate, aſſiſted Anna to mount. They rode abreaſt for ſome time, till the road being too narrow to admit of four horſes, Anna was obliged to ride behind;—but if you think ſhe rode alone, you are greatly miſtaken; for Percival, who watched her every motion, without ſeeming to pay very particular attention, by giving his horſe a gentle check, was inſtantly at her ſide. Anna, who had always before addreſſed him with the affectionate freedom of a ſiſter, and diſcloſed her artleſs thoughts and fine ſentiments in the ſame genuine colours as her innocent and delicate imagination painted them,

them, now felt at a loſs how to converſe with the man whoſe behaviour in the morning, though reſpectfully polite, portrayed him in a leſs diſintereſted character than ſhe wiſhed to ſee him; but afraid leſt he ſhould begin a converſation alluding to that which paſſed between them in the morning, ſhe ſummoned reſolution to her aid, and kindling the dying embers of courage that laid concealed at the bottom of her heart, ſaid—

"The deſcription you gave of the enchanting proſpects which this charming road commands, a view of, Mr. Edwin, though it ſtretched my expectations to their outermoſt boundaries, they are not in the leaſt degree contracted by the ſurvey of the delightful ſcenery."

"How few, very few there are like you, Miſs Belmont, who would ſo willingly reſign the pleaſures of a town life, and diſpenſe with the admiration of the gay ſons of faſhion, to admire thoſe beauties of nature with which beneficence has ſo richly ornamented the country!"

What

What could occaſion that involuntary ſigh which Percival heaved whilſt ſpeaking to Miſs Belmont?——————Here have I been ranſacking the repoſitory of underſtanding for no leſs than fifteen minutes and fifty-nine ſeconds, that I might explain Percival's ſigh to the ſatisfaction of my readers; and though I may be endued with twice as much vanity as the reſt of my ſpecies, I have, nevertheleſs, condeſcended to brand myſelf with ſtupidity; for, after minutely enquiring into the various cauſes and effects which Miſs Belmont's ſpeech and Mr. Edwin's anſwer would produce on every other paſſion man is ſubject to, I cannot diſcover that any ideal ſenſation would have raiſed that involuntary expreſſion called a ſigh; it muſt therefore unavoidably be the peculiar, yet ſilent, attribute of love.

Painful Sympathy and merciful Compaſſion declare they will guide my pen, whilſt tender Pity, commiſerating the troubled ſource of ſorrow that flows from unrequited love, indites, in the ſentimental language of Sterne,

"Alas! *poor Percival Edwin!*"

But

But let us return to Anna, who, anſwering Percival, ſaid—

"The praiſes you beſtow, Mr. Edwin, are undeſerved, ſince I reſign none of the pleaſures you mention to view the works of Nature, as I have not yet had an opportunity of taſting the ſprings of amuſement and delight which I have heard flow unceaſingly through all quarters of the metropolis."

"I am poſitive," replied Percival, "Miſs Belmont's diſcriminating judgment would ſoon convince her that the aſſertion was erroneous; for ſhe would very ſoon find the ſprings of pleaſure dry up in the heat of the emporium, whilſt Paſſion, ſeizing the helm of Youth's pinnace, madly ſteers it againſt the tide of Reaſon. The conſequence is inevitable ruin; for, running it aground on the ſhoals of Intemperance, it ſinks, to riſe no more, in the gulph of Diſſipation."

"You have delineated nothing but danger," ſaid Anna, "and that you have painted in ſuch ſtrong ſhades of deſtruction, that I ſhall almoſt deſpair of finding the

proſpects illuminated with one gleam of happineſs"

"Miſs Belmont's deſpair will be raiſed on a very ſandy foundation," ſaid Percival, "ſince her own mind can never fail to enſure happineſs, let her ſituation be what it may."

Anna would have returned an anſwer, but Sir Charles and Lady Belmont joining them, the converſation became general; and, after a ride of four hours, they returned to Belmont to dinner.

CHAP. X.

SUPPOSE we now follow Percival, who, after having taken leave of the family, is juſt cloſing the gate that opens into the paſturage, caſting up a lingering look of mournful ſadneſs at the houſe, as if he would ſay, "How can I part from happi-

neſs

neſs and thee, Anna?" till a ſudden reflection ſeems to flaſh athwart his imagination, and turning from it as if it contained his ruin, he proceeds through the path leading to the village; and now, folding his arms in the attitude of dumb deſpair, he caſts his eyes to heaven. A deep ſigh deſcribes, more energetically than words have power to expreſs, the conflicting ſtruggles of his worthy, but diſtreſſed heart; he knows he has placed his hopes of happineſs in this life, and founded them on ſo exalted a baſis, that he is convinced they are hopeleſs. He raiſes his hands, exclaiming, "Why, Oh! why, ye heavenly Powers, have ye formed her ſo ſupremely good as to make her ſtand unrivalled, without a competitor, amidſt the creatures of thy creation? or why didſt thou not endow me with equal merit, with equal fortune, and with equal birth, that I might have dared to raiſe my aſpiring hopes to the attainment of ſuch tranſcendent and intrinſic worth? Yet let me not be guilty of impiety, in arraigning thy diſ-

penſations,

penſations, or queſtioning thy wiſe, inſcrutable decrees. Oh! teach me contentedly to enjoy that humble lot thou haſt ordained my portion; teach me to fortify my heart againſt the encroachments of love, that ſubtle invader, who, by engroſſing my affections, would wean my thoughts from Heaven!—Still then let me tread the paths of life thou haſt preſcribed, nor encourage one diſtant, one remote wiſh to deviate from the retired track; but by affording my mite to relieve the diſtreſſes of my fellow-ſufferers, whom I may meet with on my way, I may at laſt arrive with honour at the deſtined goal, where, ſhaking off this cumbrous load, I hope to meet with a reward for my ſteady perſeverance in integrity."

His hands, which were before raiſed in a ſupplicating poſture towards heaven, now fall gracefully by his ſide. He preſſes his right to his heart, bowing at the ſame time in ſilent adoration of the bounty and goodneſs of the Supreme; who, though his dominion is unbounded, his power without control, ſtill regards diminutive man with an eye of com-

placency, and receives the fervent prayer with mercy that ariſes from the ſincere heart. Percival, by his pathetic addreſs to the Deity, is inſpired with that ecſtatic glow, that indeſcribable ſenſation, that ſeems the earneſt of future Heaven. He proceeds with confidence, determined to conquer a paſſion he is convinced, from the behaviour of Anna, would be hopeleſs; and if that were not the caſe, would be ingratitude to his generous benefactor, Sir Charles, to encourage, as Fortune has placed him in a ſituation ſo many degrees inferior.

Anna, in the meantime, after the departure of Percival, took up her lute, and retired to her favourite elegant receſs, that ſhe might be at liberty to meditate on his behaviour without the fear of interruption. She had ſcarcely entered, when a piece of paper, laying on the ground, attracted her attention. She picked it up, and, by the careleſs manner in which it was folded together, ſuppoſed it might have dropped from ſomebody's pocket. The ſuppoſition was a true one; for Percival had been ſitting there that very

afternoon, and, in taking his handkerchief from his pocket, it had fallen, unperceived, to the ground. She at first hesitated whether she should open it, till some invisible, irresistible power compelled her to look at its contents, which were as follow:—

"Begone, vain Hope! thou never canst be mine!
Thy pageantry of bliss I now resign!
Thy fond, illusive, visionary dream,
Though once my happiness, and constant theme,
Has fled! for ever fled this aching heart,
Compell'd to bear Love's unrequited smart!
"Then come, mild Resignation! in thy train
Bring kind Content to mitigate my pain.
Consoling Piety, be thou my guide,
To steer my course through life's fast ebbing tide,
Whilst ev'ry peaceful joy attends the maid,
Who still to all but me, extends her aid;
Whose soul, transluccnt, glist'ning in her eye,
Sheds pitying tears when sorrow heaves the sigh;
Whose heart, humane, compassionate, and kind,
Derives new virtue from her noble mind;—
Then grant me, Heav'n, one fond, one fervent wish,
And let this earth-clad angel taste celestial bliss."

Anna knew the writing to be Percival's. Conviction told her, in plain language, it was her he loved. She sighed! she could not restrain the tears of

regret; for her tender heart, unlike too many of her ſex, felt grieved and afflicted at being the ſource of any one's ſorrow, inſtead of being gratified at retaining ſo noble a captive to her charms in the bonds of ſlaviſh and deſpotic love. She roſe, and, in the tender accents of compaſſion, exclaimed, "Why, Percival! why did you ever look upon me with the eye of affection? I approve your talents; I eſteem your numerous virtues; I reſpect you for your misfortunes; I adore the generous expanſion of your ſoul, and the undeviating rectitude of your principles; but indeed I cannot love! No, that tender ſentiment is not blended with thoſe your merit inſpires within my boſom; and without that, I cannot conſent to unite my fate to any mortal's. If our affections were in our own diſpoſal, mine ſhould inſtantly be placed on you: for where could I find an object on whom more worthily to beſtow them? But ſince that is not the caſe, I cannot (though Heaven knows how willingly I would) ſooth your ſorrows into peace."

She

She again heaved a ſigh in pity to his ſufferings, and, taking up her lute, endeavoured to calm the internal troubles that diſquieted the uſual ſerenity of her boſom.

The evening was calculated to inſpire content. The ſilver moon had traverſed half the concave vault of Heaven, and was now deſcending with a graceful, majeſtic motion, attended by an innumerable train of ſtars and planets; whilſt the calm, unruffled boſom of the Severn reflected its mild beauties to the admiring conſtellations, that could not leave their ſtationary poſitions to attend it down the Weſtern ſky. Anna drew down one partition, that ſhe might have a full view of the beautiful planet; and, placing herſelf on the oppoſite ſide, played "Mary's Dream" with an air of ſuch expreſſive plaintive melancholy, that had you heard it, you would have ſuppoſed no inſtrument could have produced ſuch divine melody, touched by the hand of a mortal. She had begun the ſecond ſtanza, when, arriving at that part where Sandy is ſuppoſed to addreſs Mary, a fine melodious, full-toned baſs voice ſung the

words, accompanying her lute. Though ſhe could eaſily diſtinguiſh the words, yet ſhe thought it muſt be the effect of imagination. She then ſung the third verſe herſelf, to hear whether the ſurrounding hills would reverberate the ſound. All was ſtill. No noiſe was heard, ſave that which echo gave, and the plaintive harmony of the nightingale, that was melancholy warbling on the branches of the oak that overſhadowed her receſs.—Almoſt convinced ſhe had been miſtaken, ſhe began the laſt verſe without any fear of being interrupted, till the voice, which ſounded from the water, again began its melodious ſtrains; whilſt the mellow tones of her lute were ſcarcely made to whiſper, except a ſtring or two, which was ſtruck with the finger of judgment at intervals during the ſong.

It was nearly finiſhed, when ſhe advanced to that part ſhe had opened by letting down the partition, to diſcover to whom ſhe was ſo much indebted, and plainly diſtinguiſhed, by the light of the moon, a pleaſure-boat gliding along with the tide, covered with a pale blue awning. Four men, dreſſed in uniform,

as

as rowers, had lain up their oars, that they might not interrupt the harmony, whilſt two young men ſat half reclined beneath the awning; but as the ſong was finiſhed, ſhe could not diſcover which of the two it was that had ſo delighted her, till the one, addreſſing the other, ſaid—

"Archibald, you have performed with ſo much elegance and expreſſive tenderneſs that, had I not known you too long to have ſuppoſed you guilty of ſecrecy, I ſhould abſolutely have thought that you were no ſtranger to the little blind god; and that his vulnerable darts, aided by a pair of bright eyes, had had the power to pierce your (hitherto) invulnerable breaſt."

"You know, Fitzhenry," replied the ſtranger, whoſe fine features, expreſſive of ſome ſecret ſorrow, engaged Anna's attention, "that I have almoſt poſitively ſworn never to be one of his deluded victims. My father, deceived in the ſecond choice of a woman by that curſed, hypocritical, diſſembling ſemblance of benevolence and humanity which that frail, periſhable, fraudulent ſex,

more mutable than Proteus, can aſſume at any time to gain their ambitious ends, has given me ſuch a diſguſt to marriage and the whole deſigning, artful ſex, that, in a fit of deſperation, I could almoſt hang myſelf for fear of getting beneath their clutches; for they never look at a man unleſs it be with deſign. There is ſcarcely an occupation in life, however humble (I was going to ſay however vicious), that I ſhould not think preferable to aſſociating with them."

"Thank my ſtars!" replied Fitzhenry, "your flow of bitter eloquence is exhauſted: for, upon my honour, I could ſcarcely command my patience to hear the better half of the creation ſo reviled at, becauſe ſome of them deſerve reproach. I wiſh the inviſible muſical divinity of that ruſtic temple would condeſcend to ſtep from her contemplative heights, and diſpel this pernicious poiſon from your heart."

Anna wiſhed very much to hear the remainder of the converſation; but had the inexpreſſible mortification of having her wiſh fruſtrated by the watermen plying their oars,

which

which ſoon tranſported the boat out of ſight. Nevertheleſs, ſhe ſtill ſtood by the window, reflecting on the ſingular event, and bringing back to her imagination the diſcourſe, attitude, and features with as much correctneſs as the tranſient view ſhe had of them would allow. She ſeemed to regret leaving her receſs, for fear it ſhould baniſh the pleaſing ideas from her memory. She eſſayed her lute; but no voice anſwering it, it was laid aſide, and declared (I cannot ſay with how much juſtice) harſh and diſſonant, till the ſupper bell breaking the thread of her meditations, ſhe walked home—I am very much afraid without thinking of Percival Edwin.

Love, and painful reflections, conſpired to baniſh repoſe from the humble pillow of Percival, who aroſe, unrefreſhed by ſlumber, at a very early hour in the morning, to endeavour to calm his agitated mind by enjoying the views of the country, tinged with the glowing colours of the riſing ſun. He ſtill perſiſted in his noble reſolution to think of Anna only as a ſiſter, worthy of a brother's tendereſt care and affection.

"Shall I," ſaid he, as he purſued his penſive walk, "be ſo ungrateful, be ſo great a villain, as to inflict miſery on my generous friend? who, when yet a ſtranger to my humble merits, placed ſo much confidence in me, as to introduce me to his excellent Lady, and his amiable daughter, merely becauſe I was unknown and unfriended; giving me at the ſame time a general invitation to his manſion of humanity (and the board where Plenty voids her *cornucopiæ*, whilſt Benevolence preſides to diſpenſe the generous bleſſings), with no other letter of recommendation than my misfortunes! Shall I then be the guilty wretch to diſappoint them of the fruit they expect to cull from the tender bloſſom of hope, by depriving them of their diamond of the firſt, the pureſt water? concealing it within my retirement, unnoticed by any one but myſelf, when it would even reflect additional brilliancy to the moſt ſplendid diadem of Royalty. Ah, no! I will not be guilty of ſuch diabolical injuſtice. No, Anna, this heart ſhall break, ere it ſhall reveal its ill-fated paſſion;—this heart, engroſſed by the ſoft idea of your angelic

angelic form, muſt ceaſe to tremble at your approach, muſt ceaſe to throb when, in the language of ſenſibility, you addreſs the wretched, perſecuted Percival;—yes, this heart muſt ſubdue its tender feelings, and, free from envy, calmly ſee another take poſſeſſion of the glorious treaſure!—Great God! ſupport it in the contending ſtruggle, or the ſilent tomb, now veiled in dark perſpective, will be its only refuge from complicated miſery."

Anna, who, unlike the idle votaries of faſhionable diſſipation, was always an early riſer, had left her book in the receſs, where ſhe had been reading, to take a walk on the lawn before breakfaſt. She had not proceeded far before ſhe perceived Percival approaching; and though he was the laſt perſon in the univerſe ſhe wiſhed to ſee, yet ſhe determined to accoſt him in her accuſtomed manner, that, by any alteration in her conduct towards him, ſhe might neither hurt the delicate ſuſceptibility of his feelings, nor lay a foundation whereon he might raiſe any groundleſs hopes.

Percival ſaw her, and trembled for the conſequences that might reſult from ſuch an interview, and that might ſubvert his new-formed reſolution, which he reſolved, if poſſible, to preſerve inviolable. He dreaded meeting her; his heart miſgave him; but knowing that if he ſhrunk from the trial, he could never ſurmount the innumerable difficulties that attended it, he endeavoured to prepare for it by collecting as much fortitude as he could muſter on ſo ſhort a notice.

Anna, who was neither initiated in the order of Love, nor had even entered on her noviciate, was of courſe a ſtranger to the manifold pains and troubles his votaries are liable to; and therefore did not think of imputing Percival's pallid and dejected looks to the effects of that dreadful malady when there are no hopes of a reciprocal affection. After the firſt ſalutations, ſhe addreſſed him, ſaying,

"I am afraid, Mr. Edwin, the cauſe of your early ramble is not very enviable; for your countenance depictures extreme illneſs."

"The cauſe may not be enviable, Madam," ſaid Percival, "ſince I will allow that

that the inability of enjoying repoſe made me weary of my bed, and induced me to try the effects of a ſhort excurſion; but I am totally unconſcious of any indiſpoſition, unleſs it be that depreſſion of ſpirits which lately I have been ſubject to."

"That is very ſeldom the complaint of a Theologian," ſaid Anna; "for their ſtudies in divinity generally inſpire them with that placid, reſigned content, which makes them regard the troubles, misfortunes, and diſappointments which are annexed to this life, as preparatory refiners to purify the ſoul ere it can attain unadulterated happineſs."

"Your reaſoning is ſuperlatively excellent, my dear Madam," replied Percival. "I acknowledge that religion, if properly purſued and underſtood, infuſes the peaceful ſerenity you mention; but it muſt not be forgot that mankind, indiſcriminately (let their profeſſions or occupations be what they may), are ſubject to the ſame paſſions; and though they are all endowed with reaſon, which, if properly exerted, can never fail to ſubdue them,

them, yet thoſe who labour under their baneful influence muſt inevitably be dejected."

"You will pardon my want of judgment," ſaid Anna, "in thinking there were ſome few individuals who could ſufficiently command their paſſions, as to reſtrain them within the bounds of reaſon, ſo as to prevent them from being prejudicial either to their morals, health, or underſtanding."

"It is not want of judgment makes Miſs Belmont entertain ſo favourable an opinion of human kind," replied Percival: "no, it is from ſuppoſing them equally free from guile as herſelf, whoſe pure unvitiated mind has never yet entertained one immoderate wiſh beyond the bounds of virtue;—but ſhe will find very few equals among the race of mortals; for there are ſome paſſions that enter by ſuch imperceptible gradations into the heart, that they uſurp the throne of Reaſon, ere ſhe is conſcious that they have invaded her territories."

The converſation turning on indifferent ſubjects, Anna related the adventure of the preceding evening, and was ſurpriſed to find

Fitz-

Fitzhenry had been the collegiate friend of Percival, who informed her he was now Sir William Fitzhenry, having taken poſſeſſion of a large fortune and eſtates in Ireland; but, from having received his education in England, he had entirely loſt the Iriſh accent, and was too partial to the pleaſures and amuſements of the metropolis to viſit, for any length of time, his native land.

The breakfaſt ſummons warning Anna to return, common politeneſs obliged her to aſk Percival to partake of it; but he, determined to perſevere in his harſh reſolves, politely refuſed the invitation, though I cannot ſay without a conſiderable ſhare of reluctance, and purſued his walk, to indulge his penſive meditations, with leſs pleaſure than he traverſed the laſt half mile, notwithſtanding he was very unwilling to acknowledge it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

SOME individuals have positively asserted, that when the sincere passion of love takes deep root in the human heart, it is an actual impossibility ever to eradicate it without fatally injuring the soil that nourishes it; but why was reason placed by Divine Providence in the soul of man, supported by truth and judgment, unless empowered with sufficient strength to curb the licentious courses of the passions, and confine them within the limitations of virtue? Those only wish to subvert this principle whose tainted, vitiated minds, weakened by a long habitual indulgence of their inclinations, do not chuse to stop their irregular proceedings when Reason desires them; and then alledge, as a pitiful excuse for deviating from virtue, "that their desires hurried them on with such impetuosity, that they were unable to check their progress,

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and that they had taken ſuch ſtrong poſſeſſion of their wiſhes and imagination, that it became impoſſible for reaſon to diſpoſſeſs them."

This was not the plea of the noble-minded Percival. He well knew the faculty, which diſtinguiſhes man from brutes, if properly exerciſed, can check every paſſion in its progreſs man is heir to, diſplant thoſe ſeeds which may have taken root in the heart, and ſuppreſs every propenſity to vice in its infancy. This knowledge made him repel the invaſions of Love and his collateral attendants, with his united and ſtrongeſt efforts; and though he ſuffered very ſeverely in the conflicting combat, perſeverance crowned him with victory, and peace conducted him to the temple of Hebe.

Happy to ſee him again reſtored to his wonted cheerfulneſs, Anna once more addreſſed him with that unreſtrained freedom which eſteem licenſes by a long intimacy, and a perfect knowledge of the poſſeſſive virtues of the perſon addreſſed; and though an unheeded ſigh would ſometimes eſcape from the

heart

heart of Percival, it was neither embittered by remorſe, nor tinctured with the ſuppoſition of ingratitude. His viſits were leſs frequent at Belmont, becauſe he would not give himſelf opportunities of witneſſing too often the virtues and accompliſhments of Anna.—Sir Charles would often obſerve he did not pay his viſits at the Lodge ſo conſtantly as he wiſhed him; when Percival would always excuſe himſelf by ſaying, "He found it neceſſary to pay a cloſer attention to his duties."—But this excuſe did not always appear ſatisfactory; and having ſuffered a longer time to intervene than Sir Charles thought expedient for the exerciſe of any duties, he addreſſed him the next time he came, ſaying—

"I fear, Percival, you are not the worthy young man I ſuppoſed you. I allow you preach doctrines of morality with great propriety in the pulpit; but muſt candidly confeſs I entertain ſuſpicions that it is only ſpeculative knowledge, and that you fail to enforce your precepts by example. Tell me, otherwiſe, why you ſo long abſent yourſelf from thoſe friends who flattered themſelves they

they were entitled to your eſteem. Do the duties of religion only ſo entirely engroſs your time and attention, as to leave you no leiſure to viſit at Belmont?"

Sir Charles waited for a reply; but Percival, too much affected to give one, retired to the window, conſcious that his conduct had been actuated by the moſt honourable motives. So ſevere and unmerited a reflection from his only friend diffuſed a ſickly poiſon over his heart, whilſt wounded honour inſtilled a drop of mingled ſorrow and indignation in his eye.

Anna, obſerving his countenance change, perceived ſhe had been guilty of an unintentional crime in concealing the verſes ſhe had found in the receſs from the knowledge of her parents; ſince they would have proved a ſufficient explanation of his preſent noble, diſintereſted, but cenſured behaviour. Compaſſionate ſympathy adorned her eye with its moſt beautiful token; when, haſtily riſing from her ſeat, ſhe exclaimed, with that expreſſive energy generoſity excites in haſtening

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ing to remove the ſtigma of undeſerved reproach from a worthy object—

"Upon my honour, my dear Sir, your ſuppoſition greatly injures him. I will convince you, at a future period, that, at this time, he merits your warmeſt commendations and eſteem."

Surpriſed at the unuſual warmth of Anna's expreſſions, Sir Charles coolly anſwered,—"He ſhould be happy if it were in her power."

Anna was hurt.—She thought herſelf that ſhe might have overleaped the bounds of female modeſty in ſo openly eſpouſing the cauſe of a young man; but the generoſity of her diſpoſition rendered her incapable of hearing innocence aſperſed in any form, without vindicating their characters.

Percival, who had ſomewhat recovered, entertained a more exalted opinion of her; for he thought it muſt be a being formed in a celeſtial mould, who would aſſert his innocence without being able (as he thought) to produce any proofs to corroborate the aſſertion. He roſe with gratitude beaming in his eyes,

eyes, gratefully thanking her for the cauſe ſhe had undertaken, and hoping ſhe would be enabled (though he could not gueſs by what means) to prove his innocence to Sir Charles; but if her generous exertions failed in his behalf, he would, when one particular occurrence had taken place, clear his own character. He then bowed in ſilence to Sir Charles and Lady Belmont, and returned home.

Anna now recited his converſation and behaviour to her at different times; and, producing the verſes, ſaid, "She acknowledged ſhe was guilty of an error in not having mentioned them before; but convinced ſhe could never feel any other ſentiment than eſteem for Mr. Edwin, ſhe had never given him the leaſt encouragement, and therefore thought it adviſeable to let them remain unnoticed."

Sir Charles and Lady Belmont applauded her ingenuous relation, which brought to their remembrance many particular circumſtances in his behaviour to her, which, though trifling in themſelves, and overlooked at the time, plainly evinced his ſincere attachment.

They

They could not find expreſſions energetic enough to deſcribe their admiration of his generous conduct. Sir Charles, regarding Anna with a ſcrutinizing eye, ſaid that "he ſhould like to repay his ſorrow with the cauſe that excited it, for he knew no one whom he would more willingly receive as his ſon."

Anna ſighed! A ſoft, but penſive ſhade overſpread her lovely face. She heſitated, but at length replied, "If it will conduce to your ſatisfaction, my dear Sir, or reflect additional ſplendour to your hopes of happineſs, this hand is ready to obey the injunctions my duty preſcribes; for though I cannot ſay I love Mr. Edwin, yet he has ever poſſeſſed my eſteem for his uniform adherence to honour and virtue."

"No, my charming Anna!" replied Sir Charles, delighted with her behaviour, "you have no other method of contributing to my happineſs but in conſulting your own; nor do I require any other proof of your duty, than that, in the ſelection of a partner, you will ever be directed by your own unerring judgment and virtuous principles."

Anna

Anna kiſſed her father's hand with the warm preſſure of affectionate gratitude; and tying on a little ſtraw hat, left the room to enjoy her enviable reflections in the ruſtic temple, which ſhe had conſtantly viſited every evening ſince ſhe had picked up the verſes; but I cannot divine the reaſon (though my more ſagacious readers may) which made her ſo particularly attached to this receſs.

Sir Charles, in the meantime, wrote a letter to Percival, expreſſive of the ſincere regret he felt at having wounded his feelings by his unkind, unjuſt ſuſpicions; telling him that his conduct was exculpated from the ſmalleſt imputation of any crime, and every ſhadow of offence, by evincing proofs; and though his daughter would not conſent to recompenſe his noble, diſintereſted friendſhip, yet he truſted his own feelings would be his reward, till a more generous one would appear to beſtow happineſs on him; concluding with the hope of ſeeing him as often at the Lodge as his own wiſhes would induce him to enter it.

This

This letter was immediately diſpatched to the parſonage by Anthony. Percival felt gratified on peruſing it, but could not conceive how Anna had obtained thoſe proofs, which it was evident ſhe had in her poſſeſſion, by the pointed manner in which Sir Charles mentioned her; but ſatisfied that his former love for her was known to the family, though he could not conjecture by what means, he returned a ſuitable anſwer to Sir Charles.

He viſited Belmont early the next morning, to return Anna his grateful acknowledgments; and when he parted from them (which was not till a late hour in the evening), every boſom was the ſeat of happineſs.

The days now glided away at Belmont in an uninterrupted flow of pure delight and peaceful pleaſure. Sorrow and diſcontent were even ſtrangers in the village, and Care had not ſhewn his wrinkled countenance, furrowed by the frequent traces of anxiety, ſince this amiable family had made it their reſidence.

The breakfaſt equipage was ſtill on the table, when Anthony came in with a letter in his

his hand, which he delivered to Sir Charles, and withdrew. He broke it open with a trembling earneſtneſs, perceiving the Oxford mark on it, and peruſed it, whilſt his eyes gliſtened with pleaſure. It was an epiſtle from Mr. Belmont, couched in elegant terms; purporting that he hoped to have the long anticipated pleaſure of dining with his worthy parents and amiable ſiſter on the following Tueſday.

The affectionate Anna thought the three intervening days the moſt tedious ſhe had ever ſpent. The greater part of the interval ſhe paſſed in the receſs, where ſhe frequently invoked Time to make the weary ſlow-footed hours paſs in quicker ſucceſſion; for her mind was too anxiouſly engaged in enjoying the happy meeting by the help of imagination, to ſuffer her hands to be employed in endeavouring to beguile them.

The morning, expected with ſo much impatience by the whole family, at length arrived, and every heart beat high with promiſed happineſs. Preparations were making for his reception by the houſekeeper, who

was ranſacking her repoſitories for the choiceſt dainties to treat Mr. Belmont with, who was expected by four o'clock; whilſt Anna retired to her dreſſing-room, that ſhe might be in readineſs to receive the brother who at preſent engaged the whole of her ideas.—When dreſſed, ſhe was the perfect repreſentative of Simplicity; for it conſiſted only of a plain muſlin robe, whilſt her luxuriant hair was partly confined by a ſimple wreath of artificial ſnow-drops. Dreſs and faſhion were not the objects of her conſideration; for the money, which moſt young women would have expended in purchaſing ſuperfluous ornaments, ſhe dedicated to a more noble purpoſe, and that was in liberally contributing to the relief and ſupport of two of the pooreſt families in the village: beſides, her general charities were ſo numerous, that there was ſcarce a tenant in the village who had not felt the effects of her benevolence. When Anna had finiſhed dreſſing, ſhe took up her lute, and a book, and deſired Sally to lay them on the table in the receſs, where ſhe followed, to amuſe herſelf till the arrival of her brother.

Mr.

Mr. Belmont, attended by Andrew, drove up to the gates of the Lodge at three o'clock; but as meetings of this nature are more eaſily conceived than deſcribed, I muſt truſt to the fertile imagination of my readers to depicture the fond embraces, affectionate ſalutes, kind enquiries, delighted looks, tender ſpeeches, and enchanting ſmiles, that now expreſſed the happineſs of every member of this noble manſion.

They now ſat down to table, and the firſt tumults of pleaſure having a little ſubſided, Lady Belmont, addreſſing her ſon, ſaid—

"I did not imagine, my dear George, you would have ventured to travel ſo many miles unaccompanied, for fear of being inflicted with melancholy madneſs."

"The bright ſcenes of pleaſure before me, Madam," replied Mr. Belmont, "made impatience urge me on with ſuch inconceivable ſpeed, that melancholy had no time to overtake me. Beſides, I am a very ſelfiſh mortal, and therefore did not wiſh to bring any witneſſes to my felicity; but will do myſelf the pleaſure (with your united permiſſions) to

introduce two of my friends, when the ſhooting ſeaſon commences."

Soon as the cloth was removed, and the ſervants withdrawn, Sir Charles enquired what ſort of young men his friends were.

"Their characters are unexceptionable," replied Mr. Belmont, "although their diſpoſitions are diametrically oppoſite. Mr. Douglas is the ſecond ſon of a very reſpectable family reſiding on the borders of Scotland. His family deſigned him to ſtudy the law; but a diſtant relation bequeathing him an independent fortune, free from incumbrance or reſtrictions, he is now at liberty to purſue his own inclinations. The ſtudents at Oxford were accuſtomed to dignify him with the appellation of "Biſhop Douglas," originating from the natural gravity of his diſpoſition; nevertheleſs, his inſinuating manners and pleaſing addreſs render him an univerſal favourite with the ladies."

"I intended to give my vote of approbation in favour of his character," ſaid Anna, "till your concluſive ſentence induced me to withhold it; as I would not enhance his value

value by making him my favourite at leaſt, till I have the ſatisfaction of judging of his merits."

"Well," replied Sir Charles, "portray the character of your other friend."

Mr. Belmont replied—"Be not ſevere in prejudging the merits of my friend, whom I was going to repreſent as the ſame thoughtleſs, good-tempered, rattling, lively fellow as myſelf; and, excluſive of theſe matchleſs qualifications, he is in actual poſſeſſion of immenſe landed property in Ireland."

"Pray what may be his name?" replied Sir Charles.

"I have not been long acquainted with him," anſwered Mr. Belmont, "as he has been ſpending ſome time in Wales; "but his name is Sir William Fitzhenry."

"That is a very ſingular circumſtance," ſaid Anna. "Shall I be guilty of impertinence if I enquire how you became acquainted with him? for he has left College theſe three years."

"Sir William, my dear Anna, I had the honour of being introduced to by my friend Douglas, who (though his natural diſpoſition is the direct reverſe to his) profeſſes a very ſincere friendſhip for him."

"He muſt be a very extraordinary young man," ſaid Lady Belmont, "to poſſeſs the eſteem of ſuch different characters."

"Nature, my dear Madam," he replied, "when reviewing the inhabitants of this globe, muſtered every character but one, and that was an oddity, in whom every character ſhould centre to form the whole; ſhe therefore gathered together a collection of the moſt inconſiſtent incongruities, and compounding this odd, extravagant mixture of ingredients, formed the component parts of a body. The image pleaſed her inventive fancy, and, determined it ſhould pleaſe mankind, ſhe named it William Fitzhenry; he hates the name of argument, but can be an excellent logician in vindicating the fair ſex, whom he is naturally partial to, though he would not injure innocence. He is extremely merry and vivacious;

cious; yet if diſtreſs croſſes his path, his face is inſtantly clouded by ſorrow and ſympathy. He pretends to be fond of dreſs and faſhion, yet his volatility makes him frequently neglect both. I know of no young man who is more partial to the pleaſures of the metropolis, yet he often forſakes them to relieve the miſeries of his fellow-mortals; and though his natural loquacity prevents him from keeping his own ſecrets, he can preſerve thoſe of his friends inviolable. In ſhort, he is the greateſt eccentricity imaginable; and though you were to reſide with him ſeven years, I doubt whether you would ſee his ſtores of variety exhauſted."

"He muſt be a deſerving young man," replied Sir Charles, "though I confeſs one of the moſt heterogeneous compoſitions in nature."

After having converſed a ſhort time upon indifferent topics, Mr. Belmont apologized at leaving the room, ſaying, he wiſhed to unpack his library himſelf, for his honourable company were never treated with pro-

per dignity and reſpect by Tomlins (who had now reſigned the familiar title of Andrew); and aſking Anna to ſhew him his apartment, as an excuſe to get her away, he retired.

CHAP. XII.

MR. BELMONT, entering the breakfaſt-parlour the next morning at an earlier hour than the family were accuſtomed to meet, found Anna alone, engaged with a book. Upon ſeeing her attention ſo engroſſed by the author as not to hear him, he exclaimed—

"My dear Anna, nothing ſpoils the complexion ſo ſoon as ſtudy; beſides, I want to converſe rationally with you; throw aſide the book, and tell me ſincerely who this Mr. Edwin is that Tomlins informs me is ſo conſtant a viſiter at the houſe."

"To

"To enjoy ſo great a novelty as to hear you talk rationally," ſaid Anna, with a ſmile, "I will condeſcend to anſwer your interrogatories. Mr. Edwin ſucceeded the late Curate of this pariſh; and though a young man, the purity of his morals and underſtanding enables him to fulfil the requiſite duties of his ſituation with honour and credit. Early misfortunes (having loſt his parents at a very tender age) impreſſed his countenance with the pale ſignature of melancholy, and rendered him more ſerious than the generality of young men. Sir Charles, the friend of the unfortunate, eſteems and reſpects him; for the heart of Percival has the power of the magnet, in attracting every virtue to itſelf; and to conclude his panegyric, your friend Sir William was the friend and fellow-collegian of Mr. Edwin at Cambridge, ſince which period he has never ſeen him."

"This will be pleaſing intelligence to Fitzhenry, who, I now recollect, ſaid that, when reſident in Wales, he made the ſtricteſt enquiries after an intimate friend, who he

knew had been preferred to a Curacy ſomewhere in Shropſhire; but, after finding his reſearches ineffectual, he had entirely given it up; nor, till this moment, has his friend's name ever entered my treacherous, unlucky memory."

Mr. Belmont now enquired how Anna had ſeen Sir William. She informed him of the particular circumſtances, cautioning him at the ſame time not to tell his friend; but this ſerved only to imprint it on his memory, and he, ſmiling, anſwered he ſhould not eaſily forget the romantic adventure which had created his ſiſter a goddeſs, though he never would grant promiſes, for fear that his miſchievous inclination ſhould prompt him to break them."

"You are treachery perſonified," ſaid Anna, "to gain my confidence with the intentional malignity of betraying it;—but as you acknowledge I am a divinity, you ſhall not do it with impunity; for, on the firſt commiſſion of the atrocious offence, I denounce eternal vengeance againſt you."

"The

"The conſequence then, Anna," ſaid Mr. Belmont, ſmiling, "is to be a perpetual ſtate of warfare and enmity between a divinity and a man, with the proviſo, if our tempers will enable us to carry on the offenſive engagement.

The converſation was interrupted, juſt as a formal declaration of hoſtilities was ſigned on the above conditions by the two contending powers, by the entrance of Sir Charles and Lady Belmont; but as they were not to commence for two months, they repaired to the breakfaſt-table with every appearance of mutual affection and eſteem.

The morning was ſpent by the gentlemen in walking over the eſtate, and remarking the various improvements and alterations Sir Charles had made ſince Mr. Belmont's laſt vacation. They had not walked far before they were overtaken by Percival, who, addreſſing Sir Charles, ſaid, "He had arreſted him in his progreſs, for he was going to pay his reſpects at the Lodge."

Sir Charles returned the uſual compliments, and politely introduced him to Mr.

Belmont as a young man whoſe acquaintance and friendſhip would reflect additional honour to his circle of friends. Percival, bowing, gracefully expreſſed his ſilent acknowledgments, whilſt Mr. Belmont replied, he ſhould be proud to cultivate both.

Returning to the Lodge, Mr. Belmont addreſſed his ſiſter, ſaying, "You muſt give me leave, Anna, to introduce you to a very valuable acquaintance I have met with in my morning's ramble."

Anna caſt her eyes towards the door juſt as Percival was entering; and immediately gueſſing whom his new-formed acquaintance was, ſhe replied, whilſt the bluſh of modeſty tinged her conſcious cheeks, "I hope they may all prove as honourable; but Mr. Edwin's mental qualifications have ever enſured him a favourable reception with the Belmont poſſeſſors, without requiring the aſſiſtance of a maſter of the ceremonies."

Mr. Edwin, being engaged in converſation with Lady Belmont, had not paid attention to the compliment Anna had been paying him; but Mr. Belmont, though paſſion-

ately

ately fond of his ſiſter, could not help enjoying her confuſion, and was therefore determined it ſhould not remain unnoticed; for, addreſſing Percival, he ſaid—

"Why will you ſo ſtudiouſly avoid liſtening to your own praiſes by ſo earneſtly engaging in converſation? For Heaven's ſake, ſupply my ſtation, that I may be at liberty to retire; I am ſatiated with ſuch a profuſion of compliments from Anna, extolling your mental qualifications, that I am abſolutely diſguſted with envy."

Anna certainly bluſhed ſtill deeper, for fear that Percival ſhould conſtrue this ſpeech in a wrong ſenſe; but he was too diffident of his own merit to ſuppoſe a young woman felt any partiality in his favour by beſtowing a compliment, and quickly diſpelled her groundleſs fears by anſwering—

"Miſs Belmont's compaſſionating, benevolent heart frequently induces her to regard the humble merits of the unfortunate in a more favourable light than judgment, without mercy, would behold them; but when ſhe obſerves them depreſſed, by comparing

comparing their inferior abilities to her ſuperior underſtanding, ſhe kindly endeavours to ſtimulate their minds to exertion and emulation by encouraging them with a generous compliment."

"Upon my honour," replied Mr. Belmont, "Truth is known only at College and the Inns of Court, and there, I am ſure, ſhe is often expelled by the Barriſters with coſts and damages; yet, notwithſtanding her frequent unmerited diſgrace, ſhe generally viſits the courts of juſtice in her proper dreſs;—but if ſhe would gain admittance at Belmont, ſhe is neceſſitated to aſſume the garb of Fiction, and even then ſhe is ſo ſuſpected, that, unleſs ſhe can produce the paſſport of Flattery, ſhe would find it impoſſible to gain acceſs."

"There I beg leave to diſſent from your opinion, George," ſaid Anna; "for if Truth would more frequently appear at Belmont in her ſimple ornaments, from me, at leaſt, ſhe would meet with a more favourable reception."

"Why,

"Why, Anna," ſaid Mr Belmont, "you are more vain of your ſingularities than the peacock of his plumage, or the owl of his wiſdom; for who ever heard of a female that would not ſwallow the bolus of flattery, be it never ſo groſs, with as much eaſe and pleaſure as a cameleon will flies."

"I cannot ſay that I am acquainted with any females of your deſcription," replied Anna, ſmiling; "for, I believe, every woman, who poſſeſſes a due portion of common ſenſe, would coincide with me, that praiſe is ever gratifying to the mind, if the object on whom it is beſtowed, be conſcious of deſerving it; but if that be not the caſe, it implies a cenſure for ſome breach of duty, or on ſome part of the conduct which is reprehenſible; and when it deſcends to flattery, it is certainly a genteel way (if I may be allowed the phraſe) of expreſſing the contempt entertained for the underſtanding of the perſon ſo addreſſed, and muſt, conſequently, wound the feelings."

"But celeſtial Angels," ſaid Percival, "though they may be dreſſed in earthly attire,

attire, Miſs Belmont, cannot but be conſcious of their innate worth, and therefore conſider the praiſe which mere mortals can beſtow, as the juſt tribute offered by adoration to ſuperior excellence."

"If there were gratuities for thoſe who paid the moſt elegant compliments, Percival," ſaid Sir Charles, who had juſt entered, "you would certainly gain every prize; for it is a very difficult art if executed with delicacy, and I never yet knew any one who ſo much excelled in it as yourſelf."

The conference was now ended by the bell ſummoning them to the dining-room, which was obeyed with alacrity by the gentlemen, whoſe exerciſe had made them look forward to the appointed hour ſomewhat impatiently.——

If united in the bonds of amity and affection, and placed in a ſituation above mediocrity, exempting it from the cares and ſorrows of adverſity, how ſupremely bleſſed ought that family to conſider itſelf! But how few like the family of Belmont, conſider them as bleſſings! Contented in themſelves,

Happineſs

Happineſs reigns equally over all, diffuſing wide around her rays of peaceful pleaſure, brightening every countenance within her influence with ſmiles.

Percival, though he had ceaſed to regard Anna in any other light than that of a favourite and beloved ſiſter (or rather viewed her as a poor man would a diadem, conſidering it at an humble diſtance, with admiration and aſtoniſhment, as a beautiful ornament he ſhould like to poſſeſs, but convinced that to him it was unattainable) firſt admired Mr. Belmont becauſe he was her brother; but he now eſteemed him on his own account, and was as conſtant a viſiter at the Lodge as ever he had been.

Each revolving day brought its ſtated amuſement both inſtructive and recreative, leaving a memento behind it of ſome act of virtue or humanity; and the time being nearly arrived that Mr. Belmont expected his friends, he would frequently remind his ſiſter of the pleaſant evening ſhe ſpent in the receſs, ſaying—

"Anna,

"Anna, how I ſhould have been delighted and enraptured to have heard the angelic being ſinging in the temple of the Muſes, ſituated on the ſummit of Mount Parnaſſus at Belmont!"

Anna was very much afraid he would relate the adventure to his friends, but every endeavour to make him promiſe to the contrary, was ineffectual; for the moment ſhe began to entreat, by ſome cunning evaſion he would inſtantly turn the tide of converſation into a different channel.

It was now the laſt week in Auguſt, and Mr. Belmont was daily expecting news from his friends, when he received a letter from Sir William, ſaying he ſhould bring Mr. Douglas in his phæton, and that he might expect them early in the evening on the thirtieth of Auguſt; concluding with reſpectful compliments to the family. This pleaſing intelligence afforded the higheſt ſatisfaction to Mr. Belmont, as he could now jeſt with his ſiſter at the wonder, aſtoniſhment, and admiration he ſhould excite when introducing a goddeſs to two mortals.

The

The evening, ſo much dreaded by Anna, at length arrived. She had been playing on the lute, when the candles being placed on the tables, ſhe returned it to its uſual ſtation in one corner of the room, that ſhe might join in the converſation, which naturally turned upon the expected gentlemen. Time, beguiled by the pleaſing topics, vaniſhed imperceptibly till near nine o'clock, when a loud ringing at the bell arreſted their attention, and almoſt inſtantaneouſly Mr. Douglas was announced.—Mr. Belmont met him at the door, and introduced him to Sir Charles, Lady Belmont, and his ſiſter. The well-paid compliments were ſcarcely over before Sir William Fitzhenry was likewiſe announced, who had been detained by delivering orders to his ſervants. On hearing his name mentioned, a deep glow heightened the uſual bluſh on Anna's cheek, who dreaded being introduced to him by her ſaucy brother. Mr. Belmont met him, and introduced him to his father and mother, when that ceremony being over, he took his ſiſter's hand, and addreſſing Sir William, ſaid—

"You

"You may recollect, very poſſibly, Fitz-henry, the invocation you addreſſed one moon-light evening, when in company with another gentleman on the water, to an inviſible muſical divinity of the ruſtic temple; let me then have the pleaſure of introducing this celeſtial" (preſenting his ſiſter) "to my friend, who has condeſcended to ſtep from her contemplative heights, and graciouſly aſſumed the name of Miſs Belmont; determined that your pious addreſſes, when next you ſupplicated her to diſtil poiſon from the heart, ſhould not be ſo contemptuouſly diſregarded."

"Accept, ye angelic Power, the grateful acknowledgments of an humble mortal," replied Sir William, taking the hand of Anna, and gracefully bowing over it, "and deign to liſten to a ſupplicant's entreaties to illuminate this noble manſion, ſo long as he may have the happineſs of reſiding beneath its generous roof."

Anna, with a graceful courteſy, and that majeſtic elegance of mien which dignified her deportment,

deportment, and inſpired that awe her beautiful countenance counteracted, replied,—"Celeſtials, Sir William, though they are frequently reproached, and branded with partiality and injuſtice, never fail to receive favourably the petitions of mortals, and grant thoſe prayers which may conduce to their happineſs, or contribute to their comfort, ſo long as they may continue to deſerve them. But as my vivacious brother has informed you I have now aſſumed the form of his ſiſter, the ſame language will be applicable to me as you would have addreſſed to her."

Sir William returned a bow, and ſeated himſelf in a chair placed next to Anna, when the converſation, turning on the uſual ſubjects which are generally ſtarted after an introduction, was ſupported with ſerious elegance and ſpontaneous wit, by equal learning on all ſides, till the ſupper bell demanded their attendance in another apartment.

The ſupper-room was an elegant apartment, brilliantly lighted, with ſmall wreaths of artificial myrtle and roſes careleſsly entwined among the branches of the ſconces,

and

and which Lady Belmont and Anna had juſt completed. The table was ſpread with the greateſt rarities of the ſeaſon: Elegance preſided, and none but her votaries could ever gain admiſſion. Lady Belmont being ſeated at the upper end of the table, Sir William placed himſelf by the ſide of Anna, Mr. Douglas oppoſite to her, and Mr. Belmont next to him.

Mr. Douglas, ſtruck with admiration at contemplating the beautiful penſive countenance of Anna, could not help admiring her; which Sir William obſerving, and apprehending he would loſe his ſupper from not allowing himſelf even time to taſte it, ſaid,—"Douglas, can you look upon the ſun in its meridian without the aſſiſtance of optical inſtruments?"

"I never made the trial but once," ſaid Mr. Douglas, taking the hint, "and then it was ſhaded by a cloud of ſuch indeſcribable beauty, that I could have gazed for ever without receiving any injury."

"Its exceſſive glare and dazzling luſtre muſt injure the ſight very materially, which is generally hurt by extremes," ſaid Lady Belmont,

Belmont, who was unacquainted with what they alluded to.

"Yes, yes, my dear Madam," replied Mr. Belmont, with an arch ſmile, "and my worthy friend Douglas may think himſelf very fortunate if the injury penetrates no farther; for I aſſure you I would not venture to promiſe him the proper cure."

"Then I will take every requiſite care to guard myſelf againſt its power, George," ſaid Mr. Douglas; "for I ſhould be very unwilling to be compelled to engage you as a phyſician."

The cloth being withdrawn, and the glaſs beginning to circulate, Sir William was called upon for a lady. He gave Miſs Emmeline Montgomery.

"Miſs Emmeline Montgomery, Fitzhenry! that is the name of the rural beauty educated among the mountains of North Wales, that entices even you one hundred and fifty-eight miles from the gay metropolis," ſaid Mr. Belmont; "ſhe richly deſerves to be placed in a ſtate of purgatory for having deprived me ſo long of your ſociety."

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Belmont," replied Sir William, "you are a reprobate fellow to inveigh ſo bitterly againſt a charming young woman.—Do, Miſs Belmont, be ſo merciful as to impede the rapid flow of his petulant wiſhes by naming a gentleman, that ſhe may be aſſigned over to Hymen, though he may perhaps think that the ſtate of purgatory."

"Indeed, Sir William," ſaid Sir Charles, ſmiling, "you merit applauſe for having ſo gracefully embelliſhed the invectives of George by your latter ſuppoſition; for if marriage was conſidered by the Papiſts as the ſtate by which ſouls are freed from guilt or corruption, inſtead of that horrid idea of being purified by fire, I make no doubt but the ladies would take great care to be admitted into Heaven."

"I think they would deſerve the higheſt commendations for their excellent choice," ſaid Mr. Douglas; "for I really think the marriage ſtate a very enviable one."

"Then why," replied Mr. Belmont, "do not you ſet the ſons of Faſhion an example, by leading a deſtined bride to the altar?"

"As

"As you have demanded a reaſon for this ſeeming incongruity, Belmont," replied Mr. Douglas, "I will reveal the cauſe, which I have hitherto kept a ſecret from my own family, though they have often expreſſed their aſtoniſhment at the wonderful alteration in my diſpoſition. I was on a viſit at Dumfries, in Scotland, when I got acquainted with a moſt beautiful girl, whoſe heart I fondly thought was the ſeat of mutual love, in which every female virtue concentered. Deluded by the falſe appearance of affection ſhe aſſumed, I weakly reſigned myſelf to her dominion; for in her preſence alone could I taſte of happineſs. Conſcious of her power, and proud of retaining me in her train of admirers, ſhe led me into the intricate labyrinth of love;—and when ſhe found I was too far advanced to retreat without pain, ſhe treacherouſly left me entangled in its deceitful mazes, and married another the next day. Convinced that deſpair would never extricate me, I accepted the offered aid of Reaſon, who gave me a clue, which enabled me to find a way out of it; but having once been ſo betrayed, you may eaſily

imagine my unwillingneſs to enter it again, unleſs better acquainted with my guide."

Sir William appeared much hurt at his friend's treatment. "But as there is no rule," he ſaid, "without an exception, it ſometimes happens that you meet with one woman whoſe conduct, deſerving to be branded with infamy, will frequently prejudice men who are acquainted with them to rail againſt the whole ſex; and it abſolutely enrages me to ſee the virtuous ſcorned, becauſe there are ſome guilty of vice and imprudence."

The gentlemen, ſomewhat fatigued with their journey, ſoon after the above diſcourſe withdrew to their apartments, delighted with their elegant reception, but more ſo with the amiable, accompliſhed family they were introduced to.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

MR. DOUGLAS rose an hour before the appointed breakfast time the next morning, with the intention of walking over the estate; but on entering the parlour, was surprised to find Mr. Belmont and Anna engaged in looking over some music books.

"Good morning, Miss Belmont! this is quite an unexpected pleasure; for I rose thus early to enjoy the mild beauty of the morning, as I thought, illumined with the gentle rays of the sun, which has not long risen, little expecting to find it here eclipsed."

"Why, Anna," said Mr. Belmont, smiling, "I shall certainly have a tipsey sister; she drinks such repeated draughts of intoxicating adulation."

"The poison at the bottom," said Anna, "must be better disguised, ere I can be tempted to taste the pernicious potion."

"It is an abſolute impoſſibility, my dear Madam," replied Mr. Douglas, "that you can ever receive any injury from it, ſince the cup is never offered but by the hand of Truth."

"The air of Belmont is certainly peſtilential," ſaid Mr. Belmont; "ſince even you, Douglas, are infected with the diſeaſe of flattery. But if you are inclined to walk, you will perhaps accompany me, as I am going to ſurpriſe Fitzhenry by inviting a College friend of his (whom he has not ſeen, or heard any tidings of for theſe three years paſt), to take a dinner with us to-day."

"With all my heart," replied Mr. Douglas; "but will not you, Miſs Belmont, confer an obligation by accompanying us? For your preſence will make the country aſſume its moſt beautiful appearance."

Anna, of courſe, declined going, and the gentlemen proceeded to the parſonage, where they encountered Percival at the gate, juſt returned from his walk. After introducing him to Mr. Douglas, Mr. Belmont invited him to the Lodge to dinner, ſaying he would poſitively

positively take no refusal. Percival accepted the invitation, and pressed them to stay to breakfast; but Mr. Belmont alledged, as an excuse, their wish to return before Sir William rose, that he might not learn the extent of their walk.

They arrived at the Lodge before the remainder of the family had descended from their dressing-rooms; and enquiring for Anna, Anthony informed them she was at the thatched house. Mr. Douglas thought this a strange answer; but giving his consent to go to find her, he followed without making any remarks. Mr. Belmont led him a circular way, that she might not see them, and arrived just as Anna was concluding a lesson on the lute. When she had finished, they ascended the mount, and Mr. Belmont addressing her, said,

"Here, Anna, I have brought my friend to intrude on your retirement, merely to convince him, if possible, of his mistake;—for when I promised to conduct him to your recess, which was the Temple of the Muses on the Parnassian Mount, he had the teme-

rity to declare, notwithſtanding he heard your lute, that, inſtead of any of the nine, he ſhould meet with Virtue crowned with the wreath of merit by Minerva."

"I am ſorry to pay you both ſo ill a compliment," ſaid Anna, ſmiling, "in return for your ſublime ſentiments, as to aſſure you your diſcriminating powers are not infallible; for, inſtead of this being the receſs either of an heathen or moral divinity, it is the ſequeſtered retreat of a ſimple mortal."

"If it were poſſible to diſbelieve the voice of Truth," ſaid Mr. Douglas, "this beautiful ſtructure would be almoſt a ſelf-evident proof of the contrary; but as Miſs Belmont aſſures us it is the retirement of a mortal, it would be hereſy to doubt it."

They were now obliged to obey the breakfaſt ſummons; and, on entering the parlour, found all the company aſſembled round the table. After the uſual compliments had paſſed, Mr. Belmont told his friends they might ſpend the morning agree-

able

able to their inclinations, as there were horſes in the ſtables for thoſe who choſe to ride, a river for thoſe who preferred angling, a library for the ſtudious, walks for the contemplative, and a muſic-room for thoſe who choſe to perform.

"Well, Belmont," ſaid Sir William, "you have enumerated a variety of amuſements to guard us againſt the ſpleen and vapours——"

"But you will allow," interrupted Mr. Douglas, "the very ſmall demand we have for any in this ſociety."

"Indeed," replied Sir William, "there is very little occaſion for them; but I was going to obſerve that we would be directed in our choice by the opinion of the ladies."

"Mine is always ſubſervient to the inclinations of my friends," ſaid Lady Belmont; "for I experience no greater ſatisfaction than in ſeeing them follow their own ideas of amuſement free from any reſtraint, and in being the unlimited maſters of their own time.

The gentlemen returned a graceful bow to Lady Belmont, when Sir William asked Anna which she would vote for.

"In cases of this nature, Sir William, I always give my vote to the majority."

"Then," said Sir William, "I move that we adjourn to the music-room, there to perform sonatas, cantatas, duets, solos, or in full concert, till the clock strikes twelve, and then try the effects of air and exercise by taking a ride before dinner."

This proposition was immediately assented to; and repairing to the music-room, the time was spent with the greatest harmony and concord till the horses were brought to the door by Andrew, who, after assisting his Ladies to mount, followed them alone, as the gentlemen rode their servants' horses, having travelled themselves in a phæton.

In the meantime Percival walked over to the Lodge, as he had been invited; and enquiring for Mr. Belmont, was informed they were all out, but would return to dinner. He then desired Anthony not to let any person know he had called, except Mr. Belmont,

Belmont, but to be ſure to tell him he ſhould wait his arrival in the receſs; when, taking a book out of the library, he retired to the favourite retreat of Anna, to beguile the time till their return.

Equally delighted with the ſociety and the country, the gentlemen had made them prolong their ride half an hour beyond the uſual time; and when they returned, every thing was already prepared for dinner. Mr. Belmont began to fear that Percival would diſappoint him, when Anthony, calling him out of the room, relieved his anxiety by informing him of his being in the receſs. When he left the room, Sir William addreſſing Anna, who was ſtanding by the window which looked over the lawn, ſaid—

"Do you know, Miſs Belmont, I think your brother is a very ſad dog; I have been ranſacking my magazine of underſtanding for no leſs a ſpace than three minutes (though, perhaps, you may imagine it might be done in half as many ſeconds, it not being very capacious), endeavouring to diſcover how a celeſtial goddeſs could poſſibly augment his

vanity by placing her affections on him, when he has already ſo immoderate a ſhare as never to be ſatiated with the repeated enquiries of his friends, but ſeems determined to have it gratified by granting thoſe he honours with the enviable appellation, ſo little of his company, as to make it eagerly ſought after, becauſe he will never give them an opportunity of being tired of it."

Mr. Douglas, placing her a chair, aſked if ſhe were not fatigued with her ride. Comprehending the meaning implied in his queſtion, ſhe retired from the window, telling Sir William ſhe hoped her brother would ſoon make him alter his opinion, by convincing him that he never reſigned the pleaſure of his friend's ſociety without being able to produce ſome very ſubſtantial reaſon as an apology."

"Douglas," ſaid Sir William, "do you not conſider this as the moſt extraordinary family you were ever acquainted with? for they are ſo ſtrongly linked in the chains of amity and affection, that it is an actual impoſſibility to diſunite them."

Before

Before Mr. Douglas had time to reply, Mr. Belmont entered, followed by Percival, and, addreſſing Sir William, ſaid—

"Give me leave, Fitzhenry, to introduce a brother Collegian of your's."

"Good God! my friend Percival!" exclaimed Sir William, whilſt pleaſure ſat ſparkling in his animated eyes; and cordially ſhaking his hand, he ſaid, "Why, Percival, this unexpected meeting makes me half mad with exceſſive joy! What heavenly Genii, in the name of bliſs, tranſported you here to enhance my felicity? for if we lived in the age of ſuperſtition, I ſhould abſolutely ſuppoſe ſome great Magician preſided over this enchanted and enchanting palace to charm every individual with happineſs as they entered the gates of hoſpitality."

"I have long anticipated this happy meeting with pleaſure," ſaid Percival, "convinced that the noble heart of Fitzhenry would never ſuffer time to obliterate the ſtamped ſignature which mutual friendſhip and eſteem once impreſſed; and it fully

anſwers every expectation, by compenſating for three long years' abſence."

"By heavens!" ſaid Sir William, "to forget the happy days we once ſpent together were impoſſible, even though time itſelf ſhould be at a ſtand. But tell me, my dear Percival, where you have been ſecluded; for the laſt time I was down in this part of the country, I very narrowly eſcaped being taken before the Magiſtrate in the character of a vagabond, from ſtrolling about to enquire after you."

Anna now returned to the circle ſhe had left to conceal her emotions excited in her ſympathetic boſom by the affecting interview, and congratulated Sir William and Percival in elegant terms of expreſſive ſincerity on the happy meeting.

Soon after Percival had ſatisfied Sir William's curioſity and friendly enquiries, Sir Charles and Lady Belmont entered; when dinner being ſerved up, the day paſſed away in feſtive gaiety and elegant converſation, rendered intereſting by affection, and refined by ſincere friendſhip.——

The

The days were now continually occupied in the purſuit of innocent amuſement, and it proved the beſt game to chaſe, for the recheat was not once performed upon the huntſman's horn; mental ſatisfaction never failing to ſtart it, nor content and happineſs to run it down. Thus happy, thus delighted, who then could think of leaving Belmont, Friendſhip, Virtue, Elegance, and Pleaſure without feeling regret? It was impoſſible; and Sir William and Mr. Douglas found it ſo, when the month which Mr. Belmont had invited them to ſpend at the Lodge, was expired.

"I declare," exclaimed Sir William, as he entered the apartment of his friend, "I ſhall be very unwilling to part from this delightful family and Percival, Douglas; yet it is neceſſary to think of taking leave, for to-morrow commences the ſecond week in October."

"I ſhall feel equal regret, I can aſſure you, Fitzhenry," replied Mr. Douglas, "for this has been the happieſt time I have ſpent ſince I viſited Dumfries."

"I am ſorry to hear you ſay ſo," ſaid Sir William; "I hope you do not intend to be led blindfolded into the fatal labyrinth again; for if Love is the game you mean to purſue, it is evident ſhe feels no partiality in your favour;—and though I will allow ſhe is a charming girl, ſhe is no mortal, for her conſtitution is more frigid than the frozen ocean, and her ſingular ideas are ſo refined and exalted, that ſhe derives no pleaſure but in contemplation; and the aggregate of her numerous perfections is, that ſhe is more morally philoſophical than Plato himſelf could have formed her."

"Exactly ſo," Mr. Douglas replied; "why, Fitzhenry, your judgment and penetration are indefinite, ſince it has enabled you to draw the ſame inference from her general behaviour as I have acquired by poſitive proof."

"How," exclaimed Fitzhenry, ſmiling, "how have you arrived at ſuch an uncommon degree of ſupereminence?"

"You muſt firſt reſolve to preſerve the ſecret inviolable," ſaid Mr. Douglas, "pent up

up in the inmoſt receſſes of the ſeat of friendſhip; for——"

"Oh, upon my conſcience," interrupted Sir William, with a ſmile, "it ſhall be impriſoned as cloſe as honour can poſſibly confine it."

"I am almoſt aſhamed at having obtained it by ſuch underhand means," added Mr. Douglas; "but afraid of encouraging a paſſion which in its effects had once ſo nearly proved fatal to me, without ſufficient ground on which to raiſe a foundation for the fabric of love, I informed Belmont of my perilous ſituation, and engaged him, as he valued my health and happineſs, to fathom the inclinations of his ſiſter towards me, as if he merely aſked the queſtion in the common courſe of indifferent converſation. He at firſt abſolutely refuſed, till I aſſured him, by the moſt ſolemn adjurations, my motives were truly honourable; but ſo very partial is he to his deſerving ſiſter, and ſo unwilling to gain her confidence for the expreſs purpoſe of betraying it, that, though convinced of the purity and integrity of

my

my intentions, nevertheleſs he ſubmitted with the greateſt reluctance to my entreaties; but the next day he informed me that the event proved favourable to my vanity though totally deſtructive to my wiſhes. My hopes being fruſtrated before I had placed my happineſs wholly dependant on them, have cruſhed every particle of love, but raiſed eſteem in its ſtead."

"If I were a juror, ſworn to deliver truth on the evidence which you have given," ſaid Sir William, "I ſhould abſolutely declare it not the moſt honourable, though certainly the moſt prudent, and my verdict would be immediate tranſportation and perpetual baniſhment from Belmont; but as that is not the caſe, I ſhall leave you to cogitate on the imminent danger you have run, and to adopt meaſures for avoiding it in future."

He then deſcended the ſtairs to ſeek Mr. Belmont; and meeting him in the ſtudy, informed him of his reſolution to depart on the day after the morrow.

"This haſty and precipitate determination," ſaid Mr. Belmont, "proclaims you,

you, Fitzhenry, a qualified member for Bedlam;—but it ſhall be ſooner ſaid than put in execution; for if you will not willingly grant me a longer enjoyment of your ſociety, I will enſure it by coercive meaſures; then, if you chuſe to deſert, you may go, unattended, with your knapſack at your back, for I ſhall put Douglas, with your phæton, horſes, and attendants in a ſtate of requiſition, and neither you nor your combined forces ſhall ever compel me to reſign them."

Entering the parlour, they found Lady Belmont employed at her frame; Sir Charles and Percival engaged at a game of cheſs; whilſt Anna was playing on the lute; but upon ſeeing Fitzhenry, ſhe ceaſed, ſaying,

"Sir William, your friends are all complaining of you, unanimouſly declaring they will prefer a bill of indictment againſt you, on the charge of violating the laws of friendſhip by your non-appearance in her courts of ſociety; for infringing the duties preſcribed a good Chriſtian, by not contributing, as much as lies in your power, to the happi-

neſs

neſs of your fellow-mortals; for defrauding the public, by robbing it of your ſociety; for deceiving Mr. Edwin in his opinion of your generous friendſhip, by wilfully reſigning the pleaſure of his company and converſe, to ſit alone in your room; and the ſum total is, that there are between thirty and forty charges exhibited againſt you;—and unleſs you can make an able defence, you are abſolutely defenceleſs; for here are no ſpecial pleaders to vindicate your character with the voice of Truth, no counſellors at law to exhauſt the ſtores of rhetorical eloquence in your juſtification; and how ſhall I conclude, my dear Sir?" added ſhe, addreſſing Sir Charles with a ſmile, when again turning to Fitzhenry, ſhe ſaid, "nor any pervicacious proſecutor to carry on the proceedings againſt you."

"It is admirably concluded, my dear Madam," ſaid Percival; "I wiſh more lawſuits were terminated in the ſame amicable manner."

"Nature certainly deſigned you a ſpecial pleader, Anna," ſaid Mr. Belmont; "although

though that bluſhing countenance, if admitted to the bar, would engroſs the whole attention of the Court by its novelty and ſingularity; but you muſt reſerve your oratorical powers for exertion in a different cauſe."

He then informed them of Sir William's intention to leave Belmont, which was ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the whole company.—Mr. Douglas then entering, Sir Charles entreated him to ſtay till the firſt or ſecond week in November, ſaying he would then accompany them, as he muſt viſit London about that time, to take a houſe for his family, who were to ſpend the winter ſeaſon in the metropolis. This propoſition was immediately aſſented to with manifeſt pleaſure by the gentlemen; but Percival, who had been a ſtranger to this reſolution, could not conceal his concern. He heaved a ſigh! But let not my readers' imagination tranſport their ideas beyond the bounds of truth, by ſuppoſing it the certain evidence of love:—no, Percival conquered that paſſion, to convince the weaker part of human kind it is

not

not insurmountable. The sigh he heaved was occasioned by anticipating the parting with his friends, and recollecting he should have three or four long months to live in solitude, without one conversable being with whom to associate.

CHAP. XIV.

SINCE I have not made an apostrophe for some time, let me now address thee, Friendship, thou kind and compassionate being, who, commiserating the innumerable troubles and complicated sorrows to which man is heir, art commissioned by the gods to smooth the flinty path, and kindly lend thy generous arm to support him, when, sinking beneath the accumulated cares of adversity, or groaning under the ponderous load of affliction! 'Tis then, when walking through the thorny paths of sorrow, when every step inflicts a wound still deeper, still more poignant

nant in the breaking heart of the child of Miſery, as he finds himſelf forſaken by thoſe whoſe deſertion plainly proves their ſelfiſh, contracted hearts could never find place to harbour the ſentiment of eſteem they falſely profeſſed to entertain for him, whilſt he baſked in the ſunſhine of proſperity—'tis then thy generous countenance is known, illumined with the peaceful ſmile of Benevolence, ſoftening the horrid gloom of want with the mild rays of ſympathetic comfort, diſſipating deſponding Melancholy, by bathing his corroding wounds with the balſamic tincture of Hope, and teaching him to look through the long perſpective of grief with confidence, by affording him the means to proceed, and inſpiring him with ſtrength and courage by thy mild aſſurances that he will ſoon find a termination to the dreary maze of calamity, and again enter on the plains of peace and happineſs.

But the luſtre of thy credit is too frequently tarniſhed by Self-intereſt, who profanes thy ſacred name by aſſuming thy garb, and counterfeiting thy voice and actions.

tions. She frequently meets with approbation, becauſe the fraudulent diſguiſe is not diſcovered, unleſs diſtreſs overtakes her friend, when ſhe is immediately diveſted of her aſſumed virtues, and ſeldom fails to meet with the contempt ſhe ſo juſtly merits.—But when thou, unadorned, except in the plain and ſimple ornaments of Truth, deigneſt to be the aſſociate of the ſons of Fortune, the cup of life is gilt with happineſs, and the potion it contains not only rendered palatable, but pleaſant and deſirable.

It is true, that by the ſuſceptible heart of Affliction and Adverſity thou art often thought remiſs and dilatory in exerciſing the duties of thy ſituation; and in thy progreſs thou art often aſſailed by the barbed arrows of Ingratitude. But recollect that even the look of an eye (though it be the eye of a ſtranger), can augment the ſufferings of the offſpring of Calamity, who, knowing himſelf to be unfortunate, naturally imagines he is the object of every individual's ſcorn; whilſt at the ſame time a kind look (though it even be the unmeaning ſmile of infancy)

infancy) can diſpenſe joy to his heart, and ſummon the tears of gratitude to his afflicted eye. Then be not offended at his reproaches, for remember they are uttered in the bitterneſs of diſappointment and deſpondency; nor withhold thine aid, for without thee man would neceſſarily be an unſocial being, unbleſſing and unbleſſed;—neither imparting happineſs to others, nor receiving enjoyment himſelf. Then to thee may we aſcribe the individual and univerſal bleſſings of life, though thou art often attended with uneaſineſs, for the fear of loſing thy favour; and Percival is now returning home, lamenting (comparatively ſpeaking) a momentary ſeparation from thy ſociety.—

Another month revolved at Belmont, occupied in a pleaſing routine of rational amuſements; at the expiration of which period, Sir Charles received a letter from Mr. Mordaunt (whom he had written to three weeks before the arrival of the anſwer), mentioning his having met with an advertiſement in the papers exactly correſponding to his wiſhes; ſtating that Mr.

H—w—d,

H—w—d, having occaſion to leave London, wiſhed to let his houſe, furniſhed, to ſome reſpectable family for the winter ſeaſon; and that he, Mr. Mordaunt, had engaged it in Sir Charles's name.

This intelligence was highly gratifying to Sir Charles; and the next day the old family coach, which had not ſeen ſervice for ſome years, was taken out of the coach-houſe, and, after being properly prepared, and the neceſſary luggage placed in it, the butler (who was fully commiſſioned to ſettle the neceſſary affairs with the ſteward at Groſvenor-Square), with the houſekeeper, and two female ſervants entered it; whilſt Anthony mounted the ſeat, and dexterouſly handling his whip, drove through the village, attended with ſorrowful adieus.

As the ſervants were now diſpatched to prepare for their reception, it was agreed that Sir Charles ſhould accompany his family in the travelling carriage, followed by Tomlins; whilſt the ladies' maids were to go in the chariot, with the remainder of the trunks; and

Martha,

Martha, with the two gardeners, were to remain behind, to take care of the Lodge.

Percival breakfaſted with the family the next morning, who were already equipped for the journey, which was no ſooner over, than they roſe to depart. Sir Charles and Lady Belmont took an affectionate leave of him, and repaired to the carriage, when Mr. Belmont, whoſe volatile ſpirits were ſcarcely ever depreſſed, ſhaking him by the hand, preſcribed a cure for the vapours; entreating him to take it, leſt he ſhould not have the pleaſure of embracing him on his return.—Percival ſmiled; and, taking the hand of Anna, conducted her to the carriage, when reſpectfully carrying it to his lips, he wiſhed her every happineſs Heaven could beſtow. The phæton then drew up, and the parting between Sir William and Percival was very affecting; when Mr. Douglas, taking a friendly leave of him, ſtepped into the phæton, followed by Fitzhenry, who immediately drove off in the purſuit of pleaſure, whilſt Percival, with a heart oppreſſed with

ſorrow at the ſeparation from his friends, returned to the parſonage.

On the afternoon of the fourth day from their leaving Belmont, Sir William and Mr. Douglas took leave of the family at the laſt ſtage from London, after promiſing to viſit them frequently at their new reſidence; and early in the ſame evening Sir Charles and Lady Belmont, Anna and her brother, alighted at the door of a handſome houſe in Groſvenor-Square.

The firſt day was fully occupied in ſettling themſelves in their new habitation, which was an excellent houſe, elegantly furniſhed in the firſt faſhion. The next morning a chariot drew up to the door, and a loud rap announced viſiters, when Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt were uſhered in by Tomlins.—The meeting was ſuch as might be expected, after a ſeparation of ſo many years; and the mutual congratulations and enquiries were made with the ſincerity of friendſhip on both ſides.

They were then introduced to Mr. Belmont and the lovely Anna, whoſe elegant form

form and beautiful countenance ſtruck them with admiration; whilſt the becoming eaſe and dignity with which ſhe returned their compliments, ſtamped the favourable impreſſion ſtill deeper, which her ſtriking and elegant figure imprinted at firſt ſight.

"It is wonderful," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "what a revolution a few years makes in our ſituations and ſyſtems of government:—for how are you transformed, Sir Charles, ſince I firſt left you in a parlour in St. James's-ſtreet. You were then a young man juſt entering on the ſtage of life, in an active character," added he, ſmiling at Lady Belmont, "and I now ſee you in the garb of gravity, performing the inimitable parts of the friend of mankind, and the guardian of ſprightly judgment and ſentimental merit."

"Wherefore," ſaid Mr. Belmont, "dignify me with the appellation of ſprightly judgment, when I never laid the ſmalleſt pretenſions either to wit or underſtanding. You are doing your profeſſion an irreparable injury, Mr. Mordaunt; for thinking Flattery was only known at Belmont, I ſent

Truth to the Inns of Court; but now, by ſelf-evident propoſitions, that need no explanation or illuſtration to render them intelligible, you have thoroughly convinced me that the Barriſters are wholly unacquainted with her."

"I entreat your pardon for contradicting you, Mr. Belmont," ſaid Mrs. Mordaunt, ſweetly ſmiling; "but as I entertain a fooliſh predilection for the untarniſhed honour of the profeſſion, I never hear it ſatirized without endeavouring to confute the fallacious arguments of the ſophiſtical opponent, and therefore aſſure you I have known Counſellors hold converſe with Truth for hours together."

"Oh! *pardonnez moi, ma chere Madame*," replied Mr. Belmont, gravely bowing, and endeavouring to compoſe his riſible muſcles, "I never diſputed a lawyer's converſing with Truth when he ſpoke to you, nor ever was guilty of ſuch hereſy as to doubt the veracity of the fair ſex, even though they ſhould amuſe themſelves by railing at my mental and external perfections; but," added he, looking

looking at himſelf in the pier glaſs oppoſite to him, "vanity whiſpers me they would find very little occaſion for either."

The concluſion of his ſpeech, and pretended gravity of his manner whilſt viewing himſelf in the glaſs, excited a hearty laugh at his expence; when Mr. Mordaunt, riſing from his ſeat, and ſhaking him by the hand, ſaid—

"That frank confeſſion charms me, my dear fellow; and, to aſſure you, or rather to convince you there is a remote poſſibility of a Counſellor eſteeming Truth, though even in the comical dreſs with which you adorn her, I ſhall feel myſelf happy in cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with you; and if you wiſh to confer an obligation, viſit me at the Temple as often as a leiſure moment will give you an opportunity to enter it."

Mr. Belmont politely expreſſed his acknowledgments, aſſuring him that he would take advantage of the earlieſt opportunity to convince him of his determined reſolution to profit by the invitation.

Mrs. Mordaunt riſing, Lady Belmont aſked her and Mr. Mordaunt to baniſh ceremony, and ſpend the remainder of the day with them; but this requeſt they could not comply with, as they had other morning viſits to pay, but hoped ſoon to have the pleaſure of ſeeing them at their houſe in ——— ſtreet, when they politely took leave.

The chariot had no ſooner drove off, than Sir William Fitzhenry's phæton drew up to the door; and he and another gentleman in a military uniform alighting, were ſhewn up ſtairs. Entering the apartment, he introduced the Honourable Captain Macartney, of the Guards; telling Sir Charles he had delineated his deſcriptive pieces in ſuch very intereſting colours, that that gentleman would not be ſatisfied till he had ſeen the originals.

"I hope, Sir William," ſaid Anna, addreſſing him, "you have not painted them in glaring colours; for if that be the caſe, they cannot fail to diſappoint the inſpector upon examination."

"My

"My dear Madam," replied Sir William, "I muſt pay you ſo ill a compliment as to aſſure you that your knowledge of mankind is very limited, if you can even ſuppoſe that with the twenty-fourth part of a pennyweight of vanity in his whole compoſition, a young man would ingenuouſly confeſs himſelf deficient in any of the liberal arts or ſciences, if a young lady were preſent, whom he knew to be a proficient in every one. But as we ſometimes aſſume modeſty enough to profeſs reluctance at ſounding our own praiſes (though at the ſame time I would have you underſtand that we are always willing to hear them), I muſt refer you to my friend Macartney for his opinion of them; yet, if it ſhould not be favourable to their merits," added he, with a ſmile, "I ſhould have vanity enough to declare he had neither taſte nor judgment."

Before I give Captain Macartney's reply, let me inform my readers, if I ever have any, that it is not my wiſh to render them miſanthropiſts by ſelecting every vicious character from the human race, as they paſs be-

fore me in the common walks of life, and drawing their outlines in the ſtrongeſt marks of infamy, whilſt I ſuffer the deſerving and the virtuous to paſs unnoticed;—no, my only aim is to convert thoſe into philanthropiſts who entertain an ill opinion of human kind, either from experience or illiberal prejudice, by letting the vicious paſs wholly diſregarded, whilſt I take virtúe in my right hand, negative merit in my left, and offer them to their notice.—The Honourable Captain Macartney might certainly be entitled "moral goodneſs;" ſince, with a very indifferent example conſtantly before him (as his parents were neither of them remarkable for the purity of their morals), he had never deviated from the paths of rectitude. His perſon was truly elegant; yet he was perfectly free from vanity. His courage alſo was indiſputable; for he nobly perſevered in his adherence to morality, defending the cauſe of unſupported innocence, and in preſerving his honour inviolate, in deſpite of the ſhafts of ridicule that were aimed at him by his brother Officers.

But

But it is now time to return to the company we have left, who were juſt ſeated after the introductory ceremony, and entered into converſation, when Captain Macartney, hearing Fitzhenry refer Anna to him, ſaid—

"I have no great ſkill in painting, Madam; but common ſenſe is ſufficient to convince me Sir William's deſcriptions were coloured with exact beauty and propriety, as I ſhould have known the charming original of one piece, had I met with it in Nova-Scotia, or the deſerts of Arabia."

"How long," exclaimed Mr. Belmont, with a ſignificant ſmile, "how long pray may it be, Fitzhenry, ſince you became ſo eminent an artiſt?"

"Oh Sir," ſaid Captain Macartney, "only ſince he firſt had the preſumption to copy the moſt beautiful taſk that Nature ever completed."

The converſation now took a general turn; and every topic that was brought under conſideration, was diſcuſſed with elegance, when Sir William, ſaying they were going to ſpend an hour at a ſale, aſked the

ladies if they would accompany them; but as the coach was ordered to take them to buy ſome neceſſary articles of dreſs, they politely declined.

Sir William and Captain Macartney taking leave, were aſked by Sir Charles if they would not return to dinner; but though they would willingly have accepted the invitation, they were neceſſitated to decline it, as they were engaged to dine with Captain Macartney's Colonel; when again wiſhing them a good morning, they withdrew.

CHAP. XV.

AT the expiration of a fortnight their houſe was the reſort of faſhion and elegance; and Sir William and Mr. Douglas (ſometimes attended by Captain Macartney) were almoſt as conſtantly with the family as ever they had been at the Lodge.

A day

A day was appointed, on which theſe three gentlemen were invited by Sir Charles to take a dinner with them at five o'clock, to meet Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt, when they were afterwards to proceed to the Opera.—Anna had looked forward to this day with pleaſure, as ſhe was exceedingly partial to muſic; and whether it was the promiſed entertainment that created a higher glow of animation in her countenance, or ſome ſecret impulſe which had made her take more pains than uſual in her dreſs, or whether it might not be the dreſs itſelf that made her look more beautiful, I know not; but ſhe certainly never appeared to greater advantage than when entering the apartment where the company were already aſſembled, attired in a thin plain white ſatin dreſs, faſtened round her waiſt by a ſilk cord; whilſt her hair, which was ſimply, but taſtefully dreſſed, was ornamented with a ſilver net, fancifully drawn up on the left ſide with a cluſter of ſmall diamonds.

Every eye expreſſed admiration when ſhe entered; and Captain Macartney, who was

dreſſed in his full regimental, with that elegant and unſtudied eaſe that denotes the man of faſhion, roſe from his ſeat, where he had been converſing with Mr. Mordaunt and Lady Belmont; and politely addreſſing Anna, conducted her to the circle, where ſhe had ſcarcely paid her compliments before they were ſummoned to dinner.

"Come, my dear Miſs Belmont," ſaid Mrs. Mordaunt, taking her hand, and ſmiling at the gentlemen, as ſhe addreſſed her, "let me have the ſatisfaction of mortifying the inſufferable vanity of theſe young coxcombs by conducting you myſelf to the next room; for I know young men are ſo apt to entertain preconceived notions in favour of the irreſiſtibility of their charming perſons, that they think it an abſolute impoſſibility for a young woman to look on them without falling violently in love at firſt ſight; and as they commonly have an all-ſufficient ſhare of aſſurance, they ſeldom fail to arrogate the privilege of monopolizing their whole ideas and converſation, leaving a married woman,

like

like me, no opportunity to participate in either."

"I ſhall ſpare recrimination, Mrs. Mordaunt," ſaid Mr. Douglas, ſmiling; "but as I am not partial to invective declamations, unleſs they are licenſed by ſome corroborating proof, I ſhall take the liberty of attending you, merely to convince you that we have all vanity enough to be proud of being ſeen in the train of Lovelineſs."

"Such an extorted compliment, my dear Madam," ſaid Anna, addreſſing Mrs. Mordaunt, as Mr. Douglas ſeparated them by taking hold of each hand, "ought not to go unrewarded."

"It ſhall not, my dear," ſaid Mrs. Mordaunt, as they entered the dining-room;—"this overbearing preſumption ſhall meet with double mortification; for I ſhall retain Vanity, Wit, and Learning in my train, whilſt I conſign you to the care of Mars," handing her at the ſame time to Captain Macartney, on the oppoſite ſide of the table.

"Then

"Then I ſhall ſit by them," ſaid Mr. Mordaunt, "to take judicial notice of their proceedings."

"You are a very excellent judge truly, Mrs. Mordaunt," ſaid Mr. Belmont, ſmiling, "to pretend to paſs ſentence of puniſhment on my friend Douglas, whilſt at the ſame time you kindly beſtow a reward."

"You ſycophant!" exclaimed Mrs. Mordaunt; "in the ſchool of adulation I vow every one of your ſex have been trained by Hypocriſy in the art and exerciſe of diſſimulation."

"Truly," ſaid Sir William, "that concluſive ſentence, Mrs. Mordaunt, deſerves the unanimous acknowledgments of the company; for the married men, of courſe, are not exempted from feeling the laſh of criticiſm."

Thus did the time elapſe, till the carriages drawing up to the door, Sir Charles handed Lady Belmont into their own, which happened to be the firſt, dreſſed in an elegant ſilver muſlin, and a green ſilk net round her head, careleſſly entwined on one ſide with a

ſtring

ſtring of beautiful pearls, with the picture of Sir Charles at her boſom, ſet round with brilliants; and ſtepping in himſelf, he was followed by the Honourable Captain Macartney, leading the lovely Anna, when the carriage drew off to wait for the other two.

Mrs. Mordaunt, who was dreſſed in a plain muſlin, and a white ſatin head-dreſs, ornamented with ſilver wheat, was conducted to her chariot by Mr. Mordaunt; and Mr. Belmont, Sir William Fitzhenry, and Mr. Douglas ſtepping into another carriage, they proceeded to the Opera.

The performance had juſt begun when Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt, with Mr. Douglas, firſt entered the pit, followed by Sir Charles, Lady Belmont, Captain Macartney, who led in Anna, Sir William, and Mr. Belmont. So large and elegant a party immediately attracted univerſal attention, and an enquiry of "Who is ſhe?" reſounded from all quarters.

Wholly unconſcious of the admiration and curioſity ſhe excited among the boxes,

Anna

Anna devoted her whole attention to the harmony of the ſtage and orcheſtra; though the natural vivacity of Sir William would frequently interrupt her, whilſt Captain Macartney, with his eyes fixed on her lovely countenance, was watching every variation the different tunes effected in her expreſſive eyes and features.

The Opera was nearly over, when perceiving Sir William bow to ſomebody in the boxes, ſhe naturally inclined her eyes to where his had been directed, and obſerved an elegant young man, whoſe fine countenance, though it ſtill retained the ſmile occaſioned by ſeeing Sir William, was, nevertheleſs, clouded with a ſhade of penſive ſorrow. Her eyes met his; and bluſhing deeply, ſhe caſt her's down with unaffected modeſty. She again endeavoured to pay attention to the ſtage; it was in vain, for her eyes would wander to a different part of the houſe. Convinced ſhe had before ſeen him, ſhe endeavoured to recollect where it could poſſibly have been; but her treacherous memory, that had never before failed her,

her, now abſolutely refuſed to lend her any aſſiſtance in her reſearches. Sir William, having obſerved her confuſion when ſhe happened to meet his eyes, and by attentively watching her ſince, had ſeen how he engroſſed her attention, ſaid, with a ſmile—

"Are you acquainted with Archibald, Miſs Belmont?"

"No, Sir," ſaid Anna, very unconſcious of his meaning, "I never heard the name mentioned but once."

"And that was the evening I invoked you in your divine character," interrupted Sir William with a ſmile. "But is it poſſible you are not known to Archibald Montgomery?" he rejoined, with a look of aſtoniſhment.

"Perfectly ſo," ſaid Anna, ſmiling.

"What!" ſaid the tireſome Sir William, "have you never ſeen that gentleman before, to whom you ſaw me bow a ſhort time ago, and who has had one of the moſt beautiful pair of eyes in the whole houſe fixed on him for this laſt quarter of an hour with

the

the moſt ſcrutinizing and penetrating earneſtneſs?"

Anna perfectly recollected it was in the pleaſure-boat ſhe had ſeen thoſe features which ſhe had been examining ſo attentively; but vexed that Sir William had noticed her, ſhe bluſhed ſtill deeper than at firſt, and replied that ſhe had never ſeen him till that evening on the Severn in company with him; and then the glimpſe ſhe had of him was ſo tranſitory, that ſhe ſhould not have known him again, had not Sir William aided her weak retentive powers by informing her it was the ſame gentleman."

"I will lay my life," ſaid Sir William, ſmiling, "that neither his perſon nor his features will again be ſo eaſily obliterated from the memory of Miſs Belmont!"

Madame Banti, again beginning to exert her charming vocal powers, fortunately relieved the viſible confuſion of Anna, by affording a pretence to decline converſation with Sir William. But the ſong was plaintive; and Anna, who underſtood Italian perfectly well, and whoſe ſpirits at this moment

moment were not in the higheſt key, let fall a ſympathizing tear upon her hand. Sir William obſerving it, and fearing he might have been the occaſion of it, immediately caught the contagion; and haſtily taking her hand, ſaid—

"Miſs Belmont, I hope I have not offended you? If I have injured the delicacy of your feelings, impute it to my volatility; I would not inflict a wound in that tender boſom for the riches of Peru, for mine would inſtantly be ſtung with remorſe and contrition.

Anna could ſcarcely help ſmiling at the eagerneſs with which he made his apology; but looking in his face, and perceiving a tear half ſtarting in his eye, ſhe gently withdrew her hand, aſſuring him it was the ſong Madame Banti was ſinging which had alone occaſioned it.

Sir William bowed, and appeared ſatisfied; and the curtain ſoon after dropping, they returned to Groſvenor-ſquare.

When the company withdrew, which was not till two o'clock in the morning, Anna

retired

retired to her apartment; and ſoon diſmiſſing her maid, ſhe ſat herſelf down by the dreſſing-table, as ſhe thought, to reflect on the pleaſure of the evening. But ah! why ſits the trembling tear in Anna's eye? why heaves the deep-fetched ſigh to diſcompoſe the muſlin on her boſom? Is it the ſong which has ſo forcibly impreſſed her mind with melancholy? or is it the ſource of other's ſorrow that claims the tribute of a tear? Ah Anna! you are ſtill ignorant, ſtill unconſcious of the cauſe that now depreſſes your ſpirits; you are pleaſed at having been to the Opera, yet you have returned dejected! You, who have never before felt the baneful influence of anger, are now half diſpleaſed with Sir William Fitzhenry. But who can divine the cauſe? Was it his thoughtleſs ſentiments that, unreſtrained by falſehood, or undiſguiſed by diſſimulation, he uttered as his lively imagination formed them? No, that you eaſily forgave. Perhaps you might have been better pleaſed with him had he introduced his friend, whom you obſerved in the coffee-

room.

room. That conſcious bluſh reveals the truth, which, to yourſelf, was ſcarcely known; but recollect the ill-formed opinion Montgomery entertains of your ſex, the opprobrious epithets with which he branded every individual member of it, nor encourage the intruſion of his idea, for it may prove detrimental to your promiſed happineſs.

How deaf are we to admonition, when Fancy, dreſſed in the bewitching garment of Hope, preſents herſelf to the imagination! Anna, without reflecting that ſhe might undermine her conſtitution, took the cup offered by Love, who ſtood by, with malignant pleaſure glowing in his eyes at the thoughts of ſubduing accompliſhed Beauty, and, without fear or heſitation, ſhe imbibed the pernicious, deſtructive poiſon it contained.

The clock ſtriking three, recalled her wandering ideas; and haſtily undreſſing herſelf, ſhe repaired to bed. Sleep ſoon ſhackled her corporeal faculties in the fetters of Inſenſibility; but the ſoul, which

nothing

nothing can retain in captivity, was left to rove, unconfined, in the unlimited immenſities of imagination; and the intricate perplexities of a dream renewed the pleaſing ſcenes of the laſt few hours, painted in the livelieſt colours, whilſt Fancy flew to reconduct the inſinuative image of Archibald Montgomery to the place where ſhe had firſt ſeen him. The ſmile of peace ſometimes played round her mouth in token of preſent happineſs, but it was only a temporary enjoyment; for the look of ſatisfaction was ſhortly baniſhed from her penſive features by a tear, the melancholy earneſt of future ſorrow.

She roſe the next morning very little refreſhed by her uneaſy repoſe; and deſcending to the parlour, found her brother already up, engaged in writing a letter; who, upon ſeeing her, exclaimed—

"Ha, Sentiment! I am ſincerely happy to ſee you; for, upon my honour, I have been tortured upon the rack of impatience this laſt half hour for the want of ſome ſociable being to whom I might communicate my

my intelligence; and from having been compelled to keep a ſecret ſo long, I have ſuffered all the horrific terrors of the Inquiſition."

"If I were your moſt inveterate enemy," ſaid Anna, ſmiling, "I could not wiſh you to experience greater torments; but as your ſiſter, my dear George, I hope you may never ſuffer greater than this fatal ſecret has cauſed you;—and, to convince you that it is my wiſh to alleviate even your pretended afflictions, I will now, if you pleaſe, eaſe you of the ponderous burthen by participation."

"By Heavens!" replied Mr. Belmont, "I ſhould imagine you were one of the beſt girls the three kingdoms could produce, did I not think you might be partly influenced by female curioſity; but as I am too generous to keep you in ſuſpenſe, I have had a charming letter from poor Edwin, telling me he has juſt riſen from the bed of ſickneſs, and the firſt thing he called for was pen and ink to addreſs his friend."

"Gracious

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Anna, in the tremulous accents of ſenſibility, "what does he ſay has been his complaint?"

"A delirious fever," replied Mr. Belmont, "which he ſays would certainly have launched him into eternity, had it not been for the unremitting care, tenderneſs, and attention of the good old woman, his ſervant, who has injured her own health very conſiderably by conſtantly ſitting up with him; and that he is ſo emaciated, ſo wonderfully altered, that he is poſitive his deareſt friends would look upon him as an abſolute ſtranger."

"Poor Percival!" ſaid Anna, in the voice of compaſſion, wiping the tears of ſympathizing ſorrow from her eyes. "Does he not, George, mention any primary cauſe to which he can attribute this dreadful malady?"

"He does not complain of any," ſaid Mr. Belmont; "though, from the exquiſite ſenſibility of his feelings, I am inclined to believe it may have been occaſioned by the ſeparation from his friends."

The

The bell ringing, they adjourned to the breakfaſt-parlour, when Mr. Belmont mentioning Percival's illneſs, Sir Charles could not help looking at Anna, as if he would ſay ſhe only could remove the cauſe of his diſorder. A ſigh evinced ſhe underſtood him; but Sir Charles was abſolutely miſtaken in his opinion of Percival, who, by conſidering Anna as a ſuperior being, had entirely ceaſed to love, though he regarded her with the moſt tender, but reſpectful eſteem;—and ſo ſtrict were his principles of honour, and notions of rectitude, that, had her hand now been offered him, I doubt whether he would not have refuſed it; though had ſhe been in an inferior ſituation of life, he would ſtill have received it as the greateſt favour he could aſk, and the greateſt bleſſing Heaven could beſtow.

The painful ſenſations of Anna prevented her from partaking of the meal before her; and as ſoon as it was removed, ſhe retired to her room, that ſhe might be at liberty to enjoy her reflections unobſerved. Humanity fixed them on Percival, otherwiſe they

would have wandered to the ſcenes of the preceding evening.

CHAP. XVI.

TIME, on the wings of Pleaſure, flew with amazing velocity, and each ſwift paſſing hour left not a ſingle trace behind it either of care or diſappointment. Amuſements were purſued with moderation, and therefore never failed to leave a reliſh behind them which ſtill pleaſed on reflection; and as they were choſen judiciouſly, they improved the mind and underſtanding, as well as pleaſed the ſenſes. True benevolence, in any ſituation, can never fail to find objects of charity: Anna knew it, and let not a ſingle day paſs without a memorial to regiſter it among the pleaſures of reflection.

It is true ſhe could not be juſtly eſteemed contented; for when at the Theatres, Opera, Aſſemblies, or in the private circles of faſhionable

faſhionable elegance, the troubleſome idea of Archibald Montgomery would ſtill intrude on her imagination; and her eyes would frequently wander in anxious expectation of ſeeing him, though hitherto ſhe had been conſtantly diſappointed.

By ſome ſhe might, perhaps, be thought a weak, fooliſh girl for ſuffering an abſolute ſtranger to engroſs ſo much of her attention; and a man too, who ſhe knew entertained ſo bad an opinion of the female ſex, that he might with juſtice be ranked in the claſs of miſogamiſts. In vain ſhe endeavoured to eraſe him from her mind; but every trial ſerved to impreſs his image ſtill deeper on her heart.

Three months had now nearly elapſed ſince ſhe firſt ſaw him at the Opera; and not having met with him at any public place of diverſion ſince that period, ſhe began to entertain fears of never ſeeing him again. Sir William had carefully avoided mentioning him; and though he was a conſtant viſiter at the houſe, the name of Montgomery had never once eſcaped his lips.

Sir Charles invited him and Captain Macartney to accompany them to Drury-Lane Theatre one evening; and on entering a front box, the firſt object that caught Anna's attention was Archibald Montgomery ſeated in the adjoining one. Sir William, who was handing her in, was too much engaged to perceive his friend, although he ſat in the very next ſeat; and placing Anna in the corner, he ſeated himſelf between her and her brother. Thinking he had placed her there through deſign, conſcience, that is ever buſy on ſuch occaſions, painted her cheeks with a deep crimſon; but Sir William, being very fortunately engaged in converſation with her brother and Lady Belmont, it paſſed off unnoticed.

Montgomery's eyes confeſſed his opinion of Anna's beauty as Sir William led her to her ſeat, though they were almoſt inſtantly averted. Anna obſerved him; and recollecting the ſpeech he had made on the water, about a woman never looking at a man without deſign, ſhe immediately reſolved not to look at him again. The curtain drawing

ing up, her attention was directly engaged by the entrance of Caſtalio and Polydore, it being the tragedy of the Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage. It was the firſt ſhe had ever been to (for though ſhe had ſeen ſeveral plays, they were all comedies), and her ideas were ſoon ſo intereſted in the performance, that ſhe even forgot there was ſuch a perſon as Montgomery near her.

The tears, which had been ſtealing down her cheeks for ſome time in ſilent ſorrow, began to flow apace in the middle of the fourth act, where Chamont kneeling, entreats the pardon of the old Acaſto, after having inſulted him in his paſſion, occaſioned by the unkind treatment of Caſtalio to his ſiſter Monimia. Montgomery perceived her ſympathetic affliction. He thought her tears appeared to flow from the ſource of genuine ſenſibility.—He wiſhed they might not be artificial; yet could he think a woman poſſeſſed the true virtue of humanity? No! he was reſolved not to look at her. Tears, he had often ſaid, were ſnares to catch deluded man; and though Anna's countenance appeared the

artleſs picture of Nature, he would not particularize her, by ſuppoſing her alone exempt from the natural failings of the ſex, which, in his opinion, were innumerable. Nevertheleſs, his attention was ſoon attracted again by Anna, whoſe exquiſite tender feelings, overpowered by the dreadful cataſtrophe in the laſt act, had rendered her as real an object of pity as Acaſto was an imaginary one; for her ſenſes ſuſpended, ſhe fell, void of motion, on the ſhoulder of Sir William.

Convinced, by her altered countenance, that her indiſpoſition could not poſſibly be aſſumed, he haſtily left his ſeat; and procuring a glaſs of water, entered Sir Charles's box, when, taking an offered bottle of hartſhorn from a lady, he approached Anna, who was ſtill ſenſeleſs in the arms of Sir William, whilſt Mr. Belmont, with concern pictured in his face, was chafing her hands, Lady Belmont holding a bottle of ſalts, and the reſt of the company variouſly occupied in affording the uſual aſſiſtance.

On his approach, they immediately made way for him to paſs. Infuſing a few drops of the

the hartſhorn in the glaſs of water, he gently offered it to Anna; who, having partly recovered, ſhewed returning ſenſe enough to drink it. She almoſt inſtantaneouſly revived, and opening her eyes, perceived Montgomery, who was ſtill holding the bottle of hartſhorn for her to ſmell to, and carefully watching her countenance. He haſtily withdrew his eyes the moment ſhe had opened her's, and bowing ſlightly, "hoped ſhe was much better." Collecting ſtrength ſufficient to riſe from the arms of Sir William, whilſt the bluſh of innate modeſty faintly tinged her cheek, ſhe aſſured him that ſhe was perfectly recovered; and apologizing for the trouble ſhe had given, ſhe alſo thanked him, in elegant terms, for his attention and the aſſiſtance which he had rendered her.

Sir William, who had regarded Anna too attentively to notice any other perſon, now caſt up his eyes to ſatisfy himſelf what ſort of a being this could be, whom he half envied for having been ſo eſſentially ſerviceable to the lovely Anna; but ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at ſeeing his friend, he exclaimed—

"Are you this miniſtering angel, Archibald Montgomery, ſent by Æſculapius with a commiſſion and a recipe, to reſtore this mortal, who is the favourite of the gods, to health?"

"I ſhall eſteem myſelf fortunate, Fitzhenry," ſaid Montgomery coolly, though, at the ſame time, the careleſs indifference with which he ſpoke, plainly evinced he was intereſted only by the common motives of humanity, "to be thought acceſſary to it."

Sir Charles then returned his grateful acknowledgments to him for his polite and humane attention, warmly preſſing him to accompany his friend Sir William to ſup with them in Groſvenor-Square; but Montgomery politely declined, alledging that he had an indiſpenſable engagement that evening, but would do himſelf the pleaſure of calling the next morning.

Though Anna would rather have remained to enjoy the company and converſation of Montgomery, ſhe was too much agitated and indiſpoſed by the preceding circumſtances to ſtay the entertainment; but expreſſing a wiſh to return to Sir Charles, after preſenting his card

card to Mr. Montgomery, he and Captain Macartney ſupported her out, followed by Sir William, Lady Belmont, and her ſon; when, ordering their carriages, they returned to Groſvenor-Square.

Having enjoyed a comfortable and refreſhing ſleep, Anna roſe the next morning perfectly reſtored to health. Whilſt ſhe was dreſſing herſelf, ſhe could not help reflecting, with pleaſure, on the adventure of the preceding evening, ſince it had introduced Montgomery to the family, whom, from ſome indefinable reaſon, which ſhe was not able to explain, ſhe had long wiſhed to be acquainted with. His behaviour to her, ſhe was certain, clearly demonſtrated his natural goodneſs, ſince even to women, who were all indiſcriminately the objects of his abhorrence, he had condeſcended to tender the compaſſionating offices of humanity; but ſhe did not immediately recollect that ſickneſs having deprived her of her ſenſes, ſhe was wholly incapable of looking upon him with premeditated deſign.

Though ſhe was no coquette, and what is

more ſingular, entirely unconſcious of her beauty, though it never failed to excite univerſal admiration, from ſome inexplicable motive ſhe had not only taken more pains with her dreſs, but even looked at herſelf in the glaſs more than was her uſual cuſtom;—but finiſhing at laſt, ſhe deſcended to the parlour, when Lady Belmont kindly enquired how ſhe had paſſed the night?

"Oh! my dear Madam," ſaid Mr. Belmont, ſmiling, "how can you ſo ſimply interrogate her? Can you think her looks would indicate ſo much pleaſure and mental ſatisfaction, if ſoft fancy had not kept her in company with that faſcinating, inſinuating, bewitching, enchanting Archibald Montgomery? Why, his very name would operate as a philter on ſome conſtitutions."

"You are no phyſician, George, if you think it would have that effect on mine," ſaid Anna.

"No," ſaid Mr. Belmont, with an affected look of ſurpriſe: "then, by that bluſhing countenance, if I were to ſearch the whole

Materia

Materia Medica, I ſhould not be able to find a better cordial to warm the frozen temperament of your compoſition; and although I have neither ſtudied the ſcience of phyſic, nor yet walked the hoſpitals, or even taken out a diploma, I have ſo much confidence in the efficacy of my preſcription, that I will forfeit the phyſician's fee if Montgomery does not, ere long, effect a wonderful alteration in your ideas, and actually diſſolve the congealed froſt of your preſent ſentiments."

"You are very loquacious, George, this morning," ſaid Lady Belmont, ſmiling.

"Oh! not at all, my dear Madam," replied Mr. Belmont; "I am only endeavouring to convince that little ſentimental, obſtinate Platoniſt," bowing to Anna, "that Nature is neither ſo refined, nor ſo morally philoſophical as ſhe pretends to be."

"Then I am afraid," ſaid Anna, with a ſweet ſmile, "that it is in ſuch an irrecoverable ſtate and hopeleſs condition, that it would be much better if it were completely extirpated."

The converſation was now interrupted by the entrance of Tomlins, who delivered ſome cards to Anna from ſeveral of the Nobility, with polite enquiries after her health. She wrote a ſuitable anſwer to each, and had ſcarcely finiſhed, when Mr. Montgomery was announced.

Whether it was the look her brother gave her, or really the name of Montgomery that acted with ſuch magic power, is really impoſſible for me to determine; but her countenance was certainly ſuffuſed with a deeper pink than uſual as he entered the room with a polite and graceful eaſe; and Sir Charles, ſhaking hands with him, expreſſed the pleaſure he experienced at ſeeing the man whoſe conduct the preceding evening had made him look forward to a more intimate acquaintance with extreme impatience. Mr. Montgomery bowed, and advancing, paid his compliments to Lady Belmont and Mr. George; when addreſſing Anna, he hoped ſhe felt no ill effects from her indiſpoſition the laſt evening.

Politely

Politely aſſuring him her health had received no injury, they took their ſeats; when, at the expiration of three hours, which had ſlipped away unnoticed, he roſe to take his leave. Sir Charles, delighted at his poliſhed manners and underſtanding, gave him a general invitation to his houſe, which he accepted with pleaſure; for, charmed with the elegant converſation of Sir Charles, the ſenſible vivacity of Mr. Belmont, the eaſy and refined manners and ſentiments of Lady Belmont, who he could not but confeſs had pleaſed him, notwithſtanding his diſinclination to allow it, and though he had ſcarcely ſuffered himſelf to look at Anna, yet acknowledging her ſentiments were uttered with elegant propriety, he returned to his lodgings, reſolving to cultivate his acquaintance with the family.

But it is now neceſſary to give my readers a faint deſcription of Archibald Montgomery, the better to enable them to form an accurate judgment of his intrinſic merit; and as I have generally obſerved if a man is ſpoken of in terms which ſpeak his praiſe,

a female's firſt enquiry is, "Is he handſome?"—never failing to judge of his merit according to the anſwer ſhe receives, in order to give them a favourable idea, I ſhall firſt inform them he was truly ſo.

Let them imagine, whoſe firſt object is beauty, a young man of two-and-twenty ſtanding before them, whoſe perſon tall, elegant, and unexceptionable, the fineſt ſculptor could not model to a nearer ſtandard of perfection, with a dark complexion, and a ſet of features that diſplayed each manly grace; whilſt a ſecret melancholy added that dignity to his actions, which, in whatever company he might be, ſtill made him the moſt conſpicuous figure, always appearing as a majeſtic planet moving among the leſs brilliant conſtellations.

Such was Archibald Montgomery, whoſe heart, generous, liberal, and expanded, was the firm ſeat of every virtue;—his ſuperiors looked on him without envy; for though poſſeſſed of every manly grace, virtue, and accompliſhment, he ſeemed to think himſelf inferior to thoſe who moved in the ſame

ſame noble ſphere. His equals reſpected, courted, and eſteemed him; for to be the friend of Montgomery was a ſilent approbation of their characters, and a letter of recommendation, which introduced them, without ceremony, into the firſt circles of faſhion. His inferiors regarded him with adoration, for his hand was ever ready to beſtow relief; and his tongue, in the moſt moving accents of pity and compaſſion, ſoothed and comforted the afflicted offspring of miſery. By him poverty never went unrelieved, humble merit unrewarded, injured innocence unredreſſed, vice unreproved, error unadmoniſhed, lowly virtue unregarded, misfortune unaſſiſted, ſorrow unpitied, or the friendleſs unfriended; yet, with all theſe perfections, Archibald Montgomery was inſenſible to the power of beauty, and a warmer ſentiment than eſteem had never yet penetrated his adamantine heart.

But as we cannot look at the ſun in its meridian, unleſs it be through a muſlin cloud, or a coloured glaſs, which, by throwing

ing

ing a ſhade between that and us, partly obſcures its reſplendent glories; ſo could we not diſcern the pure virtues of Montgomery for one ſingle foible which veiled their luſtre from our ſight. The foundation on which he raiſed his ill opinion of the ſex, I ſhall deſcribe in another chapter; for as I do not wiſh the example to be followed, though it may not be entirely unprecedented, it ſhall ſtand ſingly in this book to ſhew my deteſtation of it.

CHAP. XVII.

SIR Hugh Montgomery, Baronet, of Montgomery Hall (which was an elegant ancient building, modernized within the laſt century, and ſituated a few miles diſtance from the town of that name, in North Wales), when in his thirtieth year, married the only daughter of a clergyman, who,

who, though neither ſo beautiful nor ſo elegant in her perſon, yet, from her excellent underſtanding, and amiable diſpoſition, might juſtly be ſtyled a ſecond Lady Belmont. In the firſt year after her marriage, ſhe preſented Sir Hugh with a ſon, the preſent Archibald Montgomery; and in the ſecond with a girl, who was chriſtened Emmeline, after herſelf.

Sir Hugh's diſpoſition was open, generous, and kind; and, from having reſided in the country many years, had become particularly attached to the pleaſures it afforded. He liberally ſubſcribed to public charities, and would never ſcruple giving a beggar a ſhilling when he aſked for a ſingle halfpenny, though at the ſame time he would tell him he ought to ſeek employment. Of Lady Montgomery he was paſſionately fond; and ſoon as the little Archibald began to liſp "Papa," the pleaſures of the chace and bottle were immediately reſigned for the enjoyment of his company.

Lady Montgomery, who had entertained ſuſpicions of his ever being the domeſtic man

man ſhe wiſhed to meet with in a huſband, fearing the company he kept would lead him into many dangers when hunting and ſhooting, and, in time, entirely wean his affections from home, ſaw this happy change with ſecret delight, and ſpared no pains to render it agreeable. She happily ſucceeded, and nineteen years rolled on in an uninterrupted flow of happineſs.

At the expiration of that period her health began viſibly to decline; every medicine was tried without effect, and no hopes were entertained of her recovery. Mr. Montgomery, who was at a public ſeminary, and his ſiſter, who was at an eminent boarding-ſchool in the vicinity of London, were ſent for expreſs, and arrived juſt time enough to receive the laſt embrace and bleſſing of their dying parent.

Sir Hugh, who had attended her in her illneſs with the tendereſt care and attention of a moſt affectionate huſband, was abſolutely inconſolable for her loſs; and Archibald and Emmeline, who had been united in the bonds of the ſtricteſt love and friendſhip

from

from their earlieſt infancy, though they were deeply afflicted at the death of their mother, were obliged to diſguiſe their feelings, that they might not aggravate the poignant ſorrow of their father, but rather endeavour to divert his grief by converſation and amuſements.

Their perſevering aſſiduities, aided by the lenient hand of Time, that blunts the keeneſt arrows of affliction, at length ſucceeded in averting the danger which the deep wound, inflicted by corroding grief, had threatened to the life of their only ſurviving parent. They had the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of ſeeing their perſeverance rewarded in the convaleſcence and returning cheerfulneſs of Sir Hugh, who, perceiving their indefatigable pains and unremitting duty, would not be guilty of ſo much ingratitude as not to exert his faculties in endeavouring to promote his recovery.

Another revolving year brought renovating health and increaſing happineſs. Bleſſed in the ſociety of his children, he wiſhed for no other enjoyment; for the lively

lively vivacity of Emmeline delighted him, whilſt the excellent underſtanding, charming diſpoſition, and dutiful attention of his ſon, gratified his vanity as he reflected that he had ſuch an heir to inherit the immenſe poſſeſſions of the Montgomery family, and to perpetuate his name when Death's cold hand ſhould, in icy characters, ſummon him before the awful throne of divine juſtice.

In the ſecond year after the deceaſe of Lady Montgomery, a young widow came into the neighbourhood of Montgomery for the pretended recovery of her health; though the fact was, that ſhe might be at liberty to ſpread her ſnares for a ſecond huſband, uncenſured and unnoticed by her relations, who were ſo intolerably impertinent as to remonſtrate againſt her proceedings, and even went ſo far as to threaten to break with her entirely if ſhe did not immediately alter her conduct.

This threat diſconcerted her, as ſhe was in expectation of a very conſiderable addition to her fortune at their deceaſe, which to an artful, deſigning woman was very inadequately

adequately proportioned to her wiſhes, though by moſt people it would have been judged fully competent for anſwering every demand, procuring every enjoyment, and defraying every expence a ſingle woman of prudence could have incurred. Nevertheleſs, ſhe found it very inſufficient (for when is avarice in poſſeſſion of plenty?) and reſolved to change her condition, though ſhe wiſhed to effect it without violating the appearance of friendſhip, which intereſt whiſpered it was neceſſary to preſerve with her relations. With this intent ſeveral projects were formed by the help of the fertile imagination of that neceſſary creature to theſe intriguing ſort of ladies, generally known by the appellation of a lady's maid; but none ſeemed to promiſe ſo much ſucceſs as that of feigning illneſs, and preſenting a poor apothecary with a preſent, whom ſhe dignified with the title of Doctor, to declare the air of Wales was abſolutely neceſſary for the re-eſtabliſhment of her health.—This deep-laid ſcheme was immediately put in execution; and ſhe commiſſioned her confidant to report that ſhe was a widow

lady

lady of faſhion and fortune, come down for the recovery of her health, that had ſuſtained a ſevere ſhock by the loſs of her huſband.

This intelligence gained her numerous viſiters among the principal inhabitants of the town; and accidentally hearing Sir Hugh Montgomery was a widower, in poſſeſſion of an extenſive and well-cultivated eſtate, and maſter of a very ample fortune, ſhe inſtantly determined to lay cloſe ſiege to him, and leave no art untried to gain his affections.

Actuated by this pious reſolution, ſhe immediately found means of getting introduced to the family, and ſoon profeſſed a violent friendſhip for Emmeline, which afforded her a conſtant pretext for being at the Hall. It is true, when firſt ſhe ſaw Archibald, ſhe could not help ſecretly wiſhing he had been the poſſeſſor of the fortune and eſtates; but as to be the miſtreſs of them was the firſt object of her conſideration, ſhe contented herſelf with endeavouring to gain the affections of Sir Hugh, who was, in fact, old enough to be her father. But this was no impediment to the execution of her

plan

plan of proceedings, as her deſires were wholly abſorbed in the ſordid wiſh of accumulating riches; and for this purpoſe ſhe artfully diſguiſed her real character with the veil of reaſon and benevolence.

Bleſſed with an uncommon ſhare of beauty and elegant elocution, ſhe ſoon ingratiated herſelf into his eſteem. This ſhe no ſooner perceived, than encouraged by flattering hope, ſhe would turn the converſation on the late Lady Montgomery, never failing, whenever occaſion required, to drop a tear with the aſſumed ſoftneſs of ſenſibility;—and ſoon as ſhe was certain he had noticed it, ſhe would haſtily bruſh it away, as if unwilling he ſhould perceive it. Thus, by artfully diſcovering the tendency of his ideas and inclinations, and making her's appear naturally to coincide with his, ſhe ſo entirely won his affections, that, in a ſhort time, ſhe became Lady Montgomery.

Before one revolving year had witneſſed the connubial tie that raiſed her to the ſummit of her wiſhes, the veil of diſſimulation, which had ſo long concealed her true diſ-

poſition

position even from the penetrating eyes of Archibald Montgomery, was thrown aside, as she considered it totally unnecessary to act any longer in a borrowed character; and as a fire, if long concealed, bursts forth with redoubled violence when it can find vent, so did her passions, now they were no longer restrained by policy, break out with increased vigour from their long confinement.

Surprised at her duplicity, which even he had not seen through, Archibald concluded all women were the same when they had any desired end to gain, and became in consequence so disgusted with the whole sex, that he secretly resolved he would never subject himself to be the dupe of their hypocritical arts by marrying, or ever have any communication with them, except agreeable to the rules of common politeness.

Home at length became so disgustful, that he told his father, in as delicate a manner as possible, he no longer entered the doors with pleasure, and entreated his permission to purchase a commission in the Army.

Army. Sir Hugh liſtened to him in ſilence. Conſcious of being the occaſion of his children's unhappineſs, he would not endeavour to diſſuade him; but the ſame evening ſettled on him a thouſand a year, preſenting him with notes to the amount of another thouſand pounds to purchaſe a commiſſion, and to defray his other expences, whilſt tears of regret ſtood in his eyes at the thoughts of having occaſioned this cruel ſeparation. Archibald, overcome with mingled gratitude and ſorrow, had ſcarcely power to expreſs his ſincere thanks; and the next day, after taking an affectionate leave of Sir Hugh and his ſiſter Emmeline, and a reſpectful, though cool farewel of his mother-in-law, he ſet out for the metropolis, accompanied by two ſervants, who were ſo warmly attached to him from affection, that they declared, if he would not retain them in his ſervice, they would enliſt as privates in the regiment in which he might bear a command.

His ſpirits were at the loweſt ebb the firſt day of his being in London; and, depreſſed

more than uſual by reflecting on his father's unhappy marriage, and his once lively ſiſter Emmeline's uncomfortable ſituation, he dreſſed himſelf in the evening, and went to the Opera, in the hope of finding relief, which happened to be the ſame evening that Sir Charles Belmont's family was there, to whom it is now high time to return.

Immediately after the departure of Montgomery, Anna formed an excuſe to get out of the room, that ſhe might not be compelled to liſten to his praiſes, being conſcious ſhe never heard his name mentioned without bluſhing, neither would ſhe be the ſubject of her brother's raillery.

The following week was fixed for the family's return to Belmont. Preparations were accordingly begun in the different departments, and every one appeared anxious to be again ſettled beneath the roof of tranquillity, having had full employment on their hands ever ſince their arrival in London. Mr. Belmont thought the time had elapſed with aſtoniſhing rapidity, and had been ſoliciting Sir Charles to invite

Sir

Sir William and Mr. Montgomery to ſpend ſome weeks with them at the Lodge, in order that they might lend their aſſiſtance to diſpel the clouds of melancholy which, he made no doubt, had been gathering ſince their departure. The gentlemen at that inſtant made their appearance; when, with a look of infinite pleaſure, he exclaimed, "Ah, this is excellent!"

A ſigh eſcaped from Anna, which ſeemed to ſpeak the ſituation of her mind; but, fortunately for her, that ſigh was not heard.

"We muſt now," ſaid Mr. Belmont, "poſitively put your ſignature to an agreement, without employing evaſive art or prevarication, and that is, to accompany us to Belmont."

"I am ſorry I cannot accede to your propoſition," replied Mr. Montgomery; "for as my intention of coming to London was to draw my ſword under the banners of Royalty, you muſt be convinced that it is an actual impoſſibility for me to accept the invitation."

His reaſons, however plauſible, were at length over-ruled by the united entreaties of Sir Charles Belmont and Sir William. Totally unprepared for ſo cloſe a ſiege, he was obliged to comply with their requeſt to ſpend a month or two at the Lodge; when it was agreed that they ſhould take their breakfaſt with the family on the following Monday, which was the day fixed for their departure.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE ſun riſing with uncommon ſplendour for that early ſeaſon of the year, rendered Monday morning the true emblem of the uncontaminated mind of Anna, pure, ſerene, and unclouded. The chilling gale, overpowered by the opening beauties of the Eaſt, and chaſed by the harbinger of day, ſunk murmuring to repoſe in the icy regions

regions of the North; whilſt the ſhadowy vapours, like the bird of night (that true repreſentative of guilt), fled, abaſhed, at the fair face of Heaven. Shaking off the fetters of ſleep, Anna haſtily roſe from her bed. The delicious beauty of the morning enlivened her uſual ſpirits, whilſt a ſecret pleaſure, ariſing from the knowledge of being accompanied by Montgomery, caſt ſuch an additional expreſſion of tender ſoftneſs in her eyes, that ſhe appeared more ſtrikingly beautiful than ever. Putting on her hat and habit, and adjuſting a few trifling affairs for the journey, ſhe deſcended to the parlour, when, finding ſhe had a ſuperfluous half hour, in order to beguile it, ſhe took a walk round the ſquare.

Returning home, and finding none of the family had yet made their appearance, ſhe took her lute, and ſeated herſelf on the ſofa. Her hat was placed careleſſly by her ſide, which afforded an opportunity for her beautiful hair to diſplay its natural graces, as the bandeau which encircled her head, could not confine its luxuriant profuſion

within the preciſe rules of faſhion. The freſhneſs of the air had tinged her cheeks with the roſy bluſh of health; whilſt her lovely complexion receiving a bloom from her dark blue habit, rendered her a moſt beautiful and intereſting figure. Her ideas recurring to Montgomery, recalled the remembrance of the event which firſt introduced him to her notice; ſhe reflected on it with ſecret delight, but why ſhe could not tell. Imagination painted the ſcenery of the moonlight evening at Belmont in its moſt enchanting colours; and to bring the perſpective ſtill cloſer, who can expreſs any aſtoniſhment at her commencing the ſong with that air of intereſting elegance that ſhe now did? Her tender feelings melted in the tear that ſtood trembling in her eye, whilſt her attention was engaged with her inſtrument, ſo that ſhe did not perceive the approach of Sir William and Archibald, who had been liſtening at the door for ſome time in the attitude of ſilent admiration, till the latter exclaimed, "Good God! ſurely I have heard that plaintive melody

melody before!"—She ſtarted with ſurpriſe; but immediately riſing from her ſeat, with graceful and becoming dignity ſhe paid her compliments, apologizing for not having before obſerved them. Mr. Montgomery advanced; and, taking a chair on the other ſide of the room, ſaid—

"It is we who ought neceſſarily to apologize, I fear, Miſs Belmont, for our early and unſeaſonable intruſion."

"Apologies of that nature," replied Anna, caſting down her eyes, "in this houſe are unneceſſary compliments, as neither Sir Charles, Lady Belmont, nor my brother ever think they have enough of the ſociety of their friends; and I may truly ſay, in the language of Pope, that

"——— Thro' our free opening gate,
"None come too early, none depart too late."

"Had you included yourſelf, Miſs Belmont," ſaid Sir William, archly, "I would have thanked you for the compliment; but now I recollect, Montgomery

may lay claim to the whole of it; for I ſhould not have been here for an hour or two to come, had he not forcibly ſnatched me from the arms of Somnus, vociferating loudly at the ſame time that we ſhould keep the family waiting."

"Aha! you are a pretty fellow, Fitzhenry," exclaimed Mr. Belmont as he entered the room, "to endeavour to impoſe upon my little moraliſt, becauſe ſhe ſuſpects no one of deceit."

"Oh! huſh, for Heaven's ſake!" ſaid Sir William, "I am no friend to deceit, at leaſt when Miſs Belmont, her greateſt enemy, is by; ſo, to tell you the truth, it was my fault entirely that we were here ſo early. I aſſure you I was in ſuch haſte to viſit Belmont again, that I actually went to the lodgings of Montgomery at ſeven o'clock this morning, when, finding he had not riſen, I entered his apartment, without any ceremony, and found him 'locked in the arms of balmy ſleep.' Enraged to ſee him ſo inſenſible, I endeavoured to wake him, and told him pretty plainly we ſhould

keep the family waiting. Finding this had the desired effect, by recalling two of his senses, namely, hearing and seeing, as he immediately opened his eyes, and fixed them upon me, I very coolly descended the stairs, and walked out of the house, leaving him to reflect at leisure on his method of treatment."

"Ha, ha, ha! Montgomery," said Mr. Belmont, laughing, "how did you approve of this rough son of Æsculapius for a physician?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Sir William, "that is an admirable question, Belmont. Where, in the name of Galen, have you ever heard of a patient approving the prescriptions of his doctor? But, however, his feelings were soon composed by the efficacious powers of harmony; for now touch whatever key you will, it will produce the softest notes of melodious concord."

"Had they needed such a remedy, you should have added, Fitzhenry," said Mr. Montgomery, smiling. "But pray, Miss Belmont," added he, addressing her, "have I not

I not before heard you perform and ſing that ſong."

Anna bluſhed, and was heſitating what reply to make, when ſhe was relieved by the entrance of the Honourable Captain Macartney and Mr. Douglas, when the court of enquiry broke up for Mr. Belmont to introduce Captain Macartney to Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Douglas, in the mean-time addreſſing Anna, ſaid, "He found the roſe, that had ſo long bloſſomed in the metropolis, and attracted univerſal admiration, was going to be tranſplanted into a different garden, and that leſs beautiful plants and flowers, that had ſo long been totally excelled, would now be more noticed and admired. Sir Charles and Lady Belmont entering at the moment, prevented Anna from making a reply, as a general ſalutation was the conſequence; and breakfaſt was immediately ordered, whilſt the equipages were preparing for the journey.

Sir Charles then made Captain Macartney renew a former promiſe he had made, of

procuring leave of abſence from his regiment to ſpend a month at the Lodge as ſoon as poſſible; and Mr. Douglas, who was now detained in town by buſineſs which required his preſence, agreed to accompany him whenever he could procure it.

Breakfaſt being over, the two gentlemen took a ſhort and friendly leave of the family; when matters being finally adjuſted for the journey, and the carriages drawing up to the door, this happy party (among whom Anna could not be ranked the leaſt ſo) bade adieu to the metropolis, to taſte the pure ſprings of unadulterated pleaſure, which guilt never imbitters with the baneful drug of remorſe, that flow, uninterruptedly, amidſt the country, through the immenſurable fields of innocent delight, where peace and pleaſure eternally reign.——

The pleaſing ſounds of mirth and happineſs were again heard to echo, in reſponſive vibrations, through the ſpacious apartments of Belmont Lodge. The villagers, by the return of the family, again thought

themſelves in the poſſeſſion of plenty; and Content, who abdicated her throne when Belmont was vacated by its poſſeſſors, again reſumed her government over this happy race of mortals, who flouriſhed beneath her favouring ſmiles, like the people of England under the auſpices of their Sovereign; but when ſhe reſigned her ſceptre, like the natives of France, they were invaded by anarchy and confuſion.

Percival, who had had reaſon to fear his plant of health had totally decayed, and who was very lately happily deceived by it again flouriſhing in his frame, and bloſſoming on his cheek, was, as uſual, a conſtant viſiter at the Lodge. A ſimilarity of diſpoſition, and that mutual impreſſion of melancholy on their countenances, which ſtamped them both for the offspring of penſive Sorrow, ſoon kindled an inextinguiſhable flame of friendſhip in the boſom of him and Montgomery, who, in ſuch ſociety, promiſed himſelf a ſeries of well-ſpent hours.

The eyes of Percival no longer expreſſed unuſual animation at the approach of Anna, neither were they inſtantly averted, as if fearful of meeting her's; but, tempered with the ſoftneſs of reſpectful eſteem, they regarded her as they would any other perſon of equal merit. His countenance no longer experienced the inſtantaneous and alternate viciſſitudes of pale and crimſon, which had eſcaped unnoticed by all but Anna, neither did his voice falter when compelled to addreſs her; for now, with the ſteady voice of friendſhip, he would as frequently direct his diſcourſe to her as to any other perſon in company.

Sir Charles, Sir William, and Mr. Belmont had one day gone out for a ride, when Lady Belmont, being afflicted with a headach, apologizing to Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Edwin, left the room to try whether a little repoſe might not effect a cure. Percival immediately roſe, and taking a chair by Anna, who was finiſhing a painting at the table, ſaid—

"I have

"I have long ſought an opportunity of addreſſing Miſs Belmont, and the preſent moment is favourable to my wiſhes. Will you, therefore," added he, taking her hand, "be ſo compaſſionate as to allow me to employ it by aſking a few queſtions?"

Wondering to what this introductory prologue tended, Anna looked up in his face to ſee if there was aught there that ſhe need be afraid of; and not being able to perceive any thing but that ingenuous candour, which was his moſt prominent feature, ſhe gently withdrew her hand, and bowed aſſent. Mr. Montgomery was little leſs aſtoniſhed; but not wiſhing to interrupt the converſation, he took up a book which lay on the table, pretending to be deeply engaged with the author, though, in fact, he was examining her countenance with the cloſeſt attention, endeavouring to diſcover whether ſhe was not as well ſkilled in the arts of hypocriſy as he thought the reſt of her ſex were. But as this took up much leſs time to act than it does to relate,

Mr.

Mr. Edwin, without being obliged to ſtop, proceeded as follows :—

"Aſpiring thoughts, Miſs Belmont, once extended my ambitious hopes beyond the narrow limits of the circumambient ſphere which encircled and reſtricted the boundaries of my humble ſituation in life. I was an orphan and unfriended, when a noble, diſintereſted man, whoſe virtues made him a friend to the unfortunate, hearing of my unenviable ſituation, generouſly took me by the hand, and introduced me to his houſe as his friend."—(Anna, affected at his intereſting manner of relating it, and gueſſing that he meant her father, dropped a ſilent tear upon her paper, which did not paſs unheeded by Montgomery; but it was unnoticed, and Percival proceeded.)—"In this character I was always received by his amiable Lady with pleaſure, and was ever welcomed with the ſmiles of benevolence. But this gentleman poſſeſſed a gem, precious above any eſtimation; its intrinſic worth was unparalleled; its external beauty incomparably

comparably excellent."—(Anna bluſhed deeply, and endeavoured to hide it by ſtooping her head; but it did not eſcape the penetrating eyes of Montgomery.)—"Need I ſay," added Percival, "that I viewed it with eyes of ſordid intereſt, and wiſhed to poſſeſs it, to wear it in my boſom as one of the moſt perfect works of Nature, and the choiceſt bleſſing that Fortune or Heaven could beſtow; not reflecting that ſuch ineſtimable gems are deſtined only to gliſten in exalted ſtations. My health nearly fell a ſacrifice in the contending ſtruggle of honour and inclination; but whenever I indulged the ſoft illuſions of hope, ingratitude ſtared me in my face;—beſides," added he, looking at Anna, whoſe face was half-averted, "I had great reaſon to fear thoſe hopes were ill-founded; and indeed I am convinced they were ſo. In this ſituation I roſe one morning to endeavour to baniſh bitter reflection; you may perhaps recollect meeting me, and enquiring if I were unwell."—(Anna bowed.)—"I replied I ailed nothing but a depreſſion of ſpirits,

to

to which I was ſubject too often; though, in truth, my heart was aching with the keeneſt miſery."—(Here ſhe heaved an involuntary ſigh of pity.)—"You then ſaid," continued Percival, "that you thought low ſpirits were very ſeldom the complaint of a theologian, as you conceived that his ſtudies in divinity naturally inſpired him with content."—(Montgomery looked at Anna with mingled ſurpriſe and admiration as ſhe ſtill purſued her painting, whilſt her cheeks were dyed with bluſhes at liſtening to her own praiſes.)—"Your reaſoning that morning," added Percival, with his eyes caſt towards the ground, "convinced me how very far exceeding my deſerts was the gem I coveted; and I returned home, reſolved to conquer my inclinations, or periſh in the attempt. I began to find that reaſon daily gained ſtrength, but it was abſolutely neceſſary, for the accompliſhment of my purpoſe, to avoid temptation; and to effect that, you may remember I ſtaid away from this houſe much longer than I had been accuſtomed to do. Sir Charles thought himſelf neglected,

and

and obliquely hinted unjuſt ſuſpicions prejudicial to my honour and morals. You, the vindicator of injured innocence, perceiving I was too much hurt to ſpeak, ſtood up, and nobly aſſured Sir Charles that you would convince him, at ſome future period, I was at that moment worthieſt of his eſteem; and that you did produce ſufficient proofs to exculpate me, is evident from the letter he kindly ſent me, aſſuring me that my character was fully juſtified from the ſmalleſt imputation. Then will you think me guilty of impertinent curioſity, Miſs Belmont, if I wiſh to know what thoſe proofs were?"

"Certainly not," ſaid Anna, bowing; "but as to affect to miſunderſtand you, Mr. Edwin, I muſt be guilty of diſſimulation,—to avoid that, I will ingenuouſly confeſs that many circumſtances in your behaviour long ago convinced me that you were not quite ſo diſintereſted as I wiſhed to ſee you. It might be vanity, perhaps, that enabled me to perceive many proofs in your conduct towards me which eſcaped the notice

notice of my parents, though they fully assured me that my suppositions were too true."

"It could not be," interrupted Percival; "for Miss Belmont is the only female I ever knew exempt from the smallest particle of empty pride."

"Well," said Anna, "since you will not allow me the failing which all men have hitherto unanimously agreed that my sex inherit, from some other effect I perceived the weak foundation on which you had raised your hopes, and trembled for their safety. I could not bear to be the unwilling cause of pain to a generous mind, and was truly grieved that you had made me so."—(Here Montgomery closed his book, and stedfastly fixed his eyes on Anna)—"But how to steer clear, without splitting on a rock, between the difficulties of injuring your delicate feelings, and giving you encouragement, I knew not. In this dilemma I went to my recess, where I found this paper on the ground."—(Percival looked up whilst she opened her pocket-

pocket-book; and taking out the verſes, gracefully preſented them to him.)—"Concluding myſelf to be the perſon mentioned in it, I ſhed a tear of gratitude for your kind wiſhes, and was ſorry I could not repay them. It was the next morning I met you, and adopted that mode of conduct which you took in its right ſenſe. It may now be unneceſſary to add, that thoſe verſes were the principal proof, ſtrengthened by a few others, which made Sir Charles applaud and admire your behaviour, and expreſs a wiſh that I would reward it. I heſitated for ſome time; but at length told Sir Charles, if it would conduce to his happineſs, I would beſtow my hand, though my heart was intereſted only by eſteem, which Mr. Edwin's ſtrict and conſtant adherence to moral virtue could not fail to inſpire in any boſom. My father replied, that the only way to make him happy was to follow my own inclinations.—And now permit me," ſhe added, "to congratulate you on having conquered difficulties which many men would have deemed

deemed insurmountable, and would therefore never have contended with them."

Mr. Montgomery rose, and walked to the window, secretly admiring Anna, and resolving to except her in his opinion of the generality of the sex; whilst Percival, taking her hand, and respectfully kissing it, said—

"Oh Miss Belmont! what an invaluable treasure was this to resign, without endeavouring to obtain it; and how supremely blessed ought that man to think himself who will receive this hand at the altar, and with it a heart, which every virtue has dignified with some superior excellence! But it may not, perhaps, be disagreeable to you to hear of another circumstance of my life, which, happening when you were in London, I believe you are still unacquainted with."

He then proceeded to relate, that a Clergyman, who was on a visit in the neighbourhood, hearing he was advised to try the effects of change of air, politely introduced himself, and generously offered to officiate for him during two months;—that he accepted

his

his ſervices with ſuitable acknowledgments; and after ſettling his affairs, went into Wales, where he ſoon contracted an intimacy with a very worthy Curate; and from being conſtantly at his houſe, had frequent opportunities of admiring the modeſt worth of his amiable, affectionate daughter, which time ripened into a tenderer ſentiment than eſteem; and that, having procured the permiſſion of Mr. Mortimer to addreſs the lovely Caroline, he at preſent kept up an epiſtolary correſpondence with her.

"How!" exclaimed Mr. Montgomery, walking from the window, and taking a chair by Percival—"is it my friend Mortimer's daughter to whom you are paying your addreſſes, Edwin?"

"The ſame," replied Percival, ſmiling; "and I only look forward to a change of my ſituation for the better, when he has aſſured me that, with the conſent of Caroline, I may be put in poſſeſſion of my wiſhes."

"If we may believe all a fond father ſays," ſaid Montgomery, "ſhe is truly a deſerving girl;

girl; and I ſincerely congratulate you on your expectant happineſs."

The converſation was here interrupted by the entrance of Lady Belmont and the three gentlemen, when the converſation took a different turn.

CHAP. XIX.

THE arrival of the Honourable Captain Macartney and Mr. Douglas rendered the Lodge the ſeat of feſtive gaiety and mirth, where elegant Erudition and ſprightly Wit preſided. Honour in every heart was enthroned, and every individual paid implicit obeiſance to his mandates; whilſt goodneſs reigned in every thought, gentleneſs dwelt on every tongue, and every hand was ſwayed by humanity. You exclaim very naturally, "What a happy family!" and, excepting one ſingle perſon, I will not deny the aſſertion. But one heart was forcibly invaded by Love, who ſcrupled not

at

at beating down the fortifications which Happineſs had raiſed, and which unſuſpecting Innocence had deemed impregnable; leaving it open and expoſed to the ruinous incurſions of Sorrow, and baſely refuſing any indemnification for the deſtructive devaſtations it had made.

"Ah Anna, Anna! that night, when, after being at the Opera, a tear bedewed your pillow, did I not proclaim it the melancholy earneſt of future ſorrow? But malignant Sleep purpoſely prevented you from profiting by this admonition, by enſlaving your ſenſes in the captive bonds of Inſenſibility. You were then dreaming of Montgomery, and could not liſten to the friendly warning; imaginary Fancy had painted him afflicted amidſt the dire ſcenes of diſtreſs. You were pitying his ſufferings; but Pity is the twin ſiſter of Love; and from their earlieſt, tendereſt days of liſping infancy, they hand-in-hand have trod the path of life together. From that moment, by the ſoft, deluſive arts of his perfidious, but intereſting ſiſter, Love

pervaded

pervaded your heart; and though he is now triumphing in the ſpoils he has made, you ſtill ſeem unconſcious that he has taken entire poſſeſſion of it.

As we generally regard the faults of mankind through the magnifying glaſs of the teleſcope, whilſt the diminiſhing end of the perſpective ſcarcely makes our own viſible,—ſo do we eaſily perceive the paſſion of love in others even when it is ſprouting; but, unconſcious of its growth in our own boſoms, we ſtill deny its exiſting, even though it be in full bloſſom. This was the caſe of Anna, for ſhe knew not that it was Love which damped her ſpirits with the dew of melancholy; ſhe became entirely indifferent to the gay, enlivening, and ſocial converſe of the ſelect ſociety at the Lodge. The ſoft grace and elegance of her mien, her numerous virtues and accompliſhments, could not fail to pleaſe the diſcerning eye, and charm the enlightened underſtanding; yet Montgomery alone excepted, whoſe tranſcendent merit ſhone conſpicuous, appeared inſenſible to her worth. This was

the inexhauſtible ſource of her ſecret ſorrow. At his approach her ſpirits were exhilarated, and a ſmile played upon her countenance; but, like the deluſive ſhadow that Narciſſus courted in the water, it fled at his departure. Her lute no more is heard to breathe inſpiring ſounds of gaiety;—no, the true typical repreſentation of her own mind—its language is the diction of plaintive ſorrow, and its ſtrings are ſeldom touched, unaccompanied with the tear of woe. That peace of mind, which ſhe ſo late poſſeſſed, is fled; the pictures of delight, which ſportive Fancy coloured with the bright tints of happineſs, are now deeply ſhaded with ſable melancholy; and for the appearance of this phænomenon ſhe can aſſign no particular cauſe. Whilſt ſhe is experiencing the polite attentions of the rival advocates for her favour, among whom the moſt diſtinguiſhed is Captain Macartney, the ſtealing tears will paſs ſilently through their ſluices to dim the envied luſtre of her eyes. If Sir Charles aſks her opinion of them, ſhe owns they have merit;

but

but if ſhe ſounds their praiſe, it is with the ſteady voice of united friendſhip and eſteem, not with the faltering accents of love, tendered weak and tremulous by ſenſibility, that deſcribe the internal intereſt of her heart if Archibald Montgomery is the ſubject of converſation. If he be abſent from the Lodge, the receſs is her conſtant reſort; for there, undiſturbed, in the penſive attitude of ſorrow, ſhe derives a melancholy ſatisfaction in caſting a retroſpective look on the firſt evening that ſhe ſaw him; and yet ſhe can do all this without once imagining it the effect of love.

Montgomery going one afternoon to ſpend a few hours with Percival, ſhe withdrew from the room as ſoon as ſhe could eſcape unperceived; and wiſhing for ſolitude, ſhe knew not why, ſhe ſought the impervious ſhade of retirement, which was the little coppice before mentioned, at the termination of the avenue of trees that led to her receſs, and which was ſo contrived as to be inacceſſible to all but thoſe who were well acquainted with its perplexed in-

tricacies. Here ſhe entered; and gaining the opening in the middle, where a ſeat was placed for the benefit of the ſtudious, ſhe ſat herſelf down. Whilſt, with ſaddened looks, ſhe views the blue empyreal canopy of Heaven, you would think her reflecting on eternity; but her ideas, far from celeſtial beings, are wandering on earthly objects, till one, in whom imagination concentrates every perfection, attracts every thought and reaſoning faculty to itſelf. A tear involuntarily riſing in her ſoft blue eye, ſteals down her cheek, as if glad to be emancipated from a ſlavery ſo bewitching; whilſt ſoftly aſpirating a gentle ſigh, ſhe breathes the name of Archibald Montgomery. She ſtartles! Conſcience, for the firſt time, whiſpers that ſhe does not pronounce that name with ſuch pathetic energy, without being urged by a ſofter ſenſation than eſteem; and perceiving the error ſhe is unintentionally committing, in indulging a ſentiment that may prove ſo detrimental to her future peace, ſhe reſolves, however hard the ſtruggle, to endeavour to eradicate the ſeeds of a paſſion, which,

which, if foſtered by the genial warmth of inclination, may take too deep a root ever to be diſplanted but by the powerful hand of Death.

No ſooner had ſhe formed this reſolution, than ſhe was interrupted by the approach of Captain Macartney, who, having ſoon miſſed her from the ſocial circle, had purpoſely ſtarted a topic on which he engaged the gentlemen. He then took up a book, and ſallied forth in purſuit of her; and after having ſpent half an hour in traverſing the grounds, he arrived at this ſpot, as if by chance, and affecting an air of ſurpriſe at ſeeing her, ſaid—

"Ha! Miſs Belmont! how very cruel it was of Reaſon to run away from Argument; and by deſerting us poor mortals, leave us to wander in the dark without a guide."

"Indeed," ſaid Anna, ſomewhat confuſed at being intruded upon ſo unexpectedly, "when I left the room, I am poſitive ſhe remained in your company."

"Is there aught on earth," exclaimed Macartney, ſeating himſelf, "ſo wilfully blind as Modeſty when——"

"Flattery, interrupted Anna, ſmiling, "I will maintain is ſtill more ſo; for ſhe makes it an undeviating rule to miſtake every fault and folly for a virtue; and by gloſſing over vice with the varniſh of Adulation, ſhe miſcalls it amiable weakneſs;—nay, I have known her ſo prepoſterouſly abſurd, as to make even Deformity in love with itſelf, by maintaining it was Beauty."

"She could not do ſo at Belmont," he replied, "however her inclination might prompt her to make the experiment. But what makes Miſs Belmont ſhun the ſociety of her friends, and thus ſeclude herſelf in retirement?"

"A head-ach," replied Anna, mournfully ſmiling, "will ſcarcely plead a ſufficient apology for abſenting myſelf ſo long; I will therefore immediately return to render the excuſe more acceptable."

Saying which, ſhe tied on her hat, and ſlightly curtſying to him, left the coppice before he obſerved her, as his eyes were bent on the ground; but ſhortly raiſing them, with a deep ſigh, he exclaimed, "Oh that the head-ach was not occaſioned by a heart too deeply intereſted in the fate of one inſenſible to its merits."—When perceiving Anna had left him, he haſtily followed; and overtaking her juſt as ſhe entered on the lawn, ſaid—

"Pardon my inattention, Miſs Belmont, for my ſenſes were abſolutely ſo wholly abſorbed by my ideas, that I did not perceive you had quitted your ſeat."

She ſlightly inclined her head, when a few minutes' ſilence enſuing, ſhe endeavoured to interrupt it, by ſaying, "I am fearful, Captain Macartney, this air diſagrees with your ſpirits, for you certainly have bade adieu to vivacity."

"Can it be matter, Miſs Belmont," he replied, "for Aſtoniſhment to wonder at, when I have no hope to feed upon?"

Fortunately for Anna, at this critical juncture they were encountered by Sir William and her brother, who, upon ſeeing them, exclaimed—

"Fitzhenry! we have here happily met with Knowledge and Judgment; let us join them, my dear fellow, that, with the greateſt reſpect to Truth, we may declare that they are conducted by Prudence and Diſcretion."

"Ha! ha! that is excellent, Belmont!" replied Fitzhenry. "But I fear the world would not have it in its power to boaſt of much diſcretionary circumſpection or prudential principles, if we were its brighteſt examples of either."

"A confeſſion ſo ingenuous," ſaid Anna, with a penſive ſmile, "at leaſt deſerves the higheſt encomiums that Knowledge or Judgment can beſtow. But indeed I think the whole ſyſtem of material beings would be in a very flouriſhing ſtate, and every individual member of the world very happy, if you were the *worſt* models they were to copy."

"I thank

"I thank you for the well-paid compliment, Anna," ſaid Mr. Belmont, gratefully preſſing her hand; "for, upon my veracity, I would much rather receive one from my little ſentimental moraliſt than any of my acquaintance."

"Who would not, Belmont?" ſaid Captain Macartney, with a ſigh; "for Miſs Belmont never compliments unleſs the object deſerves commendation."

They now entered the parlour, and Anna's eyes ſparkled with pleaſure, whilſt her heart vibrated in uniſon with delight, at the ſight of Montgomery, who, at her approach, immediately preſented a chair, and entered into converſation with her; for he would now as frequently addreſs her as any of the gentlemen, though ſhe would feel chagrined at perceiving it was conſtantly with the ſame indifference.

Captain Macartney, whoſe eyes often watched her's with the moſt ſcrutinizing attention, was the only perſon preſent who obſerved the pleaſure ſhe evinced at the ſight of Montgomery. The reaſon that

his perceptive powers were ſo acute, might be; perhaps, that he was the moſt intereſted in the diſcovery; for, on perceiving it, he inſtantly turned round to the table, and engaged in a game of cheſs with Sir Charles, with which he ſoon became ſo taken up, that he either could not, or would not, again look at Anna during the evening.——

Anna's conſtitution was too tender, and her health too delicate, not to ſuffer in the contending ſtruggle of conflicting paſſions. The roſe on her cheeks began to fade like a withering flower, and the chryſtal emblem of ſilent, ſecret ſorrow was the conſtant inmate of her eye;—for who could be acquainted with Montgomery's virtues, and forbear to love? or who loving him, who had ſecretly reſolved, and frequently declared he would never marry, could be exempt from miſery? Anna was not!—Love, an abſolute tyrant where he conquers, had invaded her boſom; and, roving licentiouſly at pleaſure, rendered it like a ravaged province, deſolate and waſte. Sorrow, in gloomy ſtate, there ſat enthroned, denying admittance

admittance to Peace and Happineſs whenever they approached. But notwithſtanding her own grief, ſhe was ſtill alive to the miſeries of others, and by her the claims of humanity were never forgot.

It is before mentioned, in a former part of this hiſtory, that ſhe expended a great part of her money in contributing to the relief and ſupport of two poor families in the neighbourhood. One of theſe was a poor, hard-working woman, and mother to four young children, who muſt long ſince have periſhed through extreme want, had it not been for the friendly, charitable aid of Anna; as they were yet too young and helpleſs to aſſiſt their mother in procuring the humble means of ſubſiſtence, whoſe huſband dying, had left her expoſed to penury in the character of a widow.

The ſmall-pox had been fatally prevailing in the village; and, to add to this poor woman's diſtreſs, her four children were ſeized with it at the ſame time, the eldeſt of whom was ſcarcely ſix years of age, and the youngeſt an infant

eighteen months old; and ſhe, who could have graced the poliſhed circle of a Court, did not heſitate at entering the thatched-roof cottage of Poverty. She could ſit in a wooden chair, fearleſs of taking cold by the brick floor, and look, without ſhuddering (as many faſhionable females would do), on the white-waſhed walls. Her office was humanity; and, diſregarding every inconvenience, ſhe would nurſe, for two or three hours together, the little offspring fed by her benevolence, and clothed by her induſtry from the ſtock of Charity.

By her expreſs deſire, though unknown to him, the village apothecary was engaged to attend the children; and partly by his ſkill, but more owing to the help of Nature, the three eldeſt were ſoon reſtored to health, with no other fatal conſequence than a trifling injury to their beauty; but the infant having ſuffered more ſeverely, was recovering by very ſlow degrees from the epidemical diſtemper.

Not having ſeen them for two days, Anna roſe from table ſooner than was her uſual cuſtom;

cuſtom; and being queſtioned by her brother where ſhe was going, ſhe replied to the village, which he underſtanding, did not offer to accompany her;—but Captain Macartney, not knowing of what nature her buſineſs might be, aſked if he might not have the pleaſure of attending her; but as ſhe replied ſhe ſhould very ſoon return, it was taken for a polite refuſal, and ſhe at length ſallied forth unaccompanied."

The hills were glowing with the fervid heat of the ſummer's ſun, but Anna, conſcious of the pleaſure ſhe ſhould beſtow, was inſenſible to its ardent power; and arriving at this lowly reſidence of humble merit, ſhe was inſtantly ſurrounded by the three children, the youngeſt of whom was ſtill a beautiful boy of three years of age, who was paſſionately fond of her; and immediately catching hold of her hand, and kiſſing it, exclaimed in joyful accents—

"Oh Mammy, Mammy! my dear Miſs Belmont's come!"

This poor woman, who was always clean in her houſe and perſon, and conſtantly kept

kept her children ſo, was ſitting at her ſpinning-wheel by the ſide of a round oak table, the ſurface of which was highly poliſhed, whilſt with one foot ſhe was gently rocking the cradle of repoſing innocence; but, on the approach of Anna, ſhe inſtantly roſe from her ſeat, and placing a chair, wiping it at the ſame time with a clean cloth, ſaid—

"Oh, my dear young Lady, how glad I am to ſee you! for no one knows the pain I have been in for fear that you was ill, and could not come."

Anna ſoon ſatisfied her that had not been the caſe; when addreſſing the eldeſt girl, who ſtood by her, fondly playing with her gown, ſhe enquired what ſhe had had for dinner.

"I muſt not tell," ſaid the little girl, hanging down her head.

"Oh ſhame, naughty Sally!" ſaid the little boy, extending his infant arm to beat her—"what! not tell dear, dood Miſs Belmont that we had bead and cheeſe and water for dinner?"

"Indeed,"

"Indeed," ſaid Sally, looking up in Anna's face, "I an't naughty, for my Mammy told me not to tell."

"It is always right to do as your mother deſires you, my good little girl," ſaid Anna, at the ſame time giving her a guinea. "But go and preſent that to your Mamma, and tell her it is to buy a better dinner for to-morrow."

The poor woman gratefully declined taking it, ſaying, ſhe was aſhamed at putting her to ſo much expence, and begged ſhe would reſerve it for ſome more worthy object.

"Where ſhall I find any more deſerving than the induſtrious widow and fatherleſs children?" ſaid Anna;—"beſides, I have money fully ſufficient for anſwering other demands of charity, and muſt therefore inſiſt upon your accepting that trifle."

"Oh! indeed you are too good, Miſs Belmont," ſaid the poor woman—"much too good to live in this world."

Mr. Montgomery, taking up his ſtick ſoon after the departure of Anna, and aſk-

ing Captain Macartney to walk with him to Mr. Edwin's, paſſed by the door at this moment, when hearing the name of Belmont pronounced ſo energetically, they naturally looked in; and perceiving Anna, with her back turned towards them, gracefully bend over the cradle, and taking out the child, tenderly kiſs it, Captain Macartney could not forbear exclaiming, "By Heaven, ſhe is an angel!" and immediately entering, followed by Montgomery, ſaid—

"Pardon our intruſion, Miſs Belmont; but ſeeing you were officiating in the divine office of Humanity, and convinced that Benevolence can never have too many votaries, let the wiſh to imitate your example be our ample apology."

Confuſed by their ſudden and unexpected appearance, ſhe coolly replied that none was neceſſary; when the little boy, frightened at the regimental, hid his face in her gown, crying—

"Save me! ſave me, dear Miſs Belmont! I do not like dat naughty man."

"Not

"Not like me, my little fellow!" ſaid Captain Macartney, taking him from his hiding-place; "why if you would let me, I would love you, and give you as many pretty things as your dear Miſs Belmont."

"Will you?" ſaid the little boy, ſomewhat pacified as he ſat him on his knee. "What, will you dive my poor Mammy money when ſhe's dot none? and will you dive me nice meat to eat inſtead of bead and cheeſe, and ſiſters new frocks?"

This artleſs relation of Anna's goodneſs affected him too much to reply immediately, and Montgomery looked at her with an expreſſion which fully teſtified his approbation of her conduct; till the ſecond little girl running up to him, and laying her hand on his, looking up in his face at the ſame time with an undiſguiſed ſimplicity, in liſping accents, ſaid—

"We all love Mith Belmont. Don't you?"

Captain Macartney's eyes were inſtantly turned on Anna, who deeply bluſhing, endeavoured to conceal it by kiſſing the baby

ſhe

ſhe ſtill held; and though ſhe anxiouſly waited his reply, yet ſhe could not look at Montgomery; but he ſoon put her out of ſuſpenſe, by ſaying—

"Every perſon, my pretty girl, is admired for being good."

"Then indeed, Sir, Miſs Belmont ought to be," ſaid the poor woman, with grateful earneſtneſs, "for many's the time ſhe has ſaved my poor children from ſtarving;—and you muſt not be offended, my dear Madam," added ſhe, addreſſing Anna, "for you know they muſt have died with the ſmall-pox if you had not ſent the Doctor, and given me money to ſupport them."

Anna now roſe, and placing the child in the cradle, ſaid ſhe would take ſome other opportunity of calling, as ſhe had ſtaid more than her uſual time; and taking leave of the children, with a promiſe of ſoon ſeeing them again, inſtantly departed, but was quickly overtaken by Captain Macartney and Mr. Montgomery, who had only ſtopped behind to give a trifle to the widow, and who now begged leave to accompany

company her home, as it was too late to go to Mr. Edwin's before tea.

They had not proceeded far, when a great Newfoundland dog, iſſuing from a narrow lane that they were juſt going to paſs, made with furious ſpeed at Anna, which Montgomery perceiving, with that cool intrepidity and preſence of mind which ever diſtinguiſhed him in time of danger, and which the moſt hazardous peril could not daunt, by a well-aimed blow inſtantly knocked him down;—and well for Anna he did; for ſome country people, armed with pitch-forks, coming up, exhauſted by a long chace, immediately diſpatched him, declaring he was mad.

Montgomery could not avoid deriving ſatisfaction from the knowledge of the invaluable ſervice he had rendered the Belmont family, in preſerving Anna from a fate ſo dreadful, who greatly terrified at the threatened danger, with a countenance pale as death, was leaning on Captain Macartney; but, on his approach, in faltering accents ſhe thanked him with gratitude as her deli-

verer from a death ſo hideous; and accepting his offered arm, was carried, rather than conducted, to the Lodge.

On entering the parlour, Sir Charles, frightened at her diſordered appearance, and alternately looking at the gentlemen as if expecting ſome explanation, exclaimed—

"My dear girl! ſay, for Heaven's ſake, what is—what has been the matter?"

This ſudden exclamatory addreſs attracted general attention, and excited the greateſt curioſity, when Anna, fearful of any miſconſtructions being affixed to the gentlemen's ſilence, taking her father's hand, ſaid—

"Oh my dear Sir! that your daughter is ſtill alive—ſtill in poſſeſſion of her ſenſes, you may thank her noble preſerver; for, ere now, ſhe would have been torn to pieces, or, what is worſe, a raving maniac, had it not been for the generous arm of Mr. Montgomery, which laid the furious, mad animal in the duſt, juſt as it was within reach of your poor Anna."

Captain

Captain Macartney then recited the particulars, when, on enquiry being made for Montgomery, he was no where to be found; for ſoon as Anna began to relate the adventure, unwilling to liſten to his own praiſes, and to receive the acknowledgments of Sir Charles, he ſtole out of the apartment unperceived, and did not again return till the ſupper bell warned him of the time; when, in the moſt grateful and expreſſive terms, he was thanked by the whole family, and complimented by the reſt of the company: and the knowledge of the recent danger gave ſuch a zeſt to their preſent ſecurity, that I verily believe there was not one in the company who did not conſider the evening the happieſt they had ever ſpent. I will at leaſt anſwer for the family, even including Anna; for who would feel regret at paſt danger, if happily ſaved by Montgomery?

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

GRATITUDE will often ſtrew with a diffuſive hand the firſt ſeeds of love in the human heart, when, if the ſoil be not entirely barren of ſenſibility, or totally impoveriſhed by avarice, they ſeldom fail to take root; but if theſe ſeeds, by ſome other hand firſt implanted, have ſprouted up in a little tender flower that, like an exotic, requires artificial heat to bring it to maturity, it preſerves its tender growth from the chilling froſt of indifference, and, by its incipient warmth, ſo generouſly cheriſhes it, that, in a very ſhort time, it attains a ſtate of the greateſt perfection. But Anna's love for Montgomery needed not the aid of gratitude to cultivate it; for, like an evergreen, it bloomed eternal. Indifference could not check its growth, neither could ſorrow nor the bitterneſs of deſpondency injure

injure the root; which, ſpreading wide its various fibres, had taken ſo firm a hold of her heart, that their united endeavours could not ſhake it.

He now became more conſtantly the object of her thoughts; he had ſaved her from death, and every thing living ſerved but to remind her of the infinite obligation. But as one particular food, if taken for too long a time, ſeldom fails to bring on diſtempers;—ſo is the health conſequently injured, if one object be the only food for reflection. Anna's began very viſibly to decline; the roſes ceaſed to bloſſom on her cheeks, whilſt the lily gained aſcendancy, and daily diſcloſed its pallid tints; her lips reſigned the coral hue for the pale pearl; and even Lady Belmont began to entertain anxious maternal fears for her daughter's ſafety.

The pity and attention ſhe met with from the friendly Montgomery, like a quack medicine, that imparts a momentary relief, though at the ſame time it renders the diſorder more obſtinate, in the ſame manner

allayed

allayed her preſent pain, yet, by encouraging groundleſs hopes, it ſecretly augmented her internal wretchedneſs; for ſhe could not prevent the intruſion of a flattering expectation, when ſhe ſaw him with the niceſt art chuſe the moſt delicate pieces at table, and placing them in her plate, with mild perſuaſions tempt her to eat them, though ſhe was conſtantly diſappointed in her wiſhes, by being convinced he was actuated only by humanity; for had he felt the paſſion which preyed in her boſom, ſhe was certain that he could neither converſe nor even offer her any trifling thing with that eaſy, unreſtrained behaviour he now did.

Such was the ſituation of affairs at Belmont, when, happily for Captain Macartney, he was ſummoned to London to join his regiment; for malicious Love, who appeared to derive a malignant ſatisfaction in playing at croſs purpoſes, had nearly made him a convert to his principles by means of his agent, the lovely Anna, who gained him more votaries by her mental virtues, than many a courtly form of faſhion in the circle

of

of St. James's by their boasted external advantages.

Sir William Fitzhenry, receiving at the same time letters from London which required his immediate presence in the metropolis, agreed to accompany him and Mr. Douglas on their journey; when the succeeding day being fixed for their departure, they bade adieu to Belmont with regret, leaving Montgomery behind, who easily suffered himself to be persuaded to stay some time longer by Mr. Belmont.

Though pleased with their society, Anna could not lament the loss of it, as she had now more liberty to indulge pensive meditation in the shade of solitude with less fear of being interrupted; for she could not consent to listen to the voice of Reason, and banish the cherished image of the loved Montgomery from her bosom, where so long it had reigned alone. Love had deeply impressed it in her heart, where she secretly resolved it should remain; for, without the beloved idea for reflection to

feed upon, ſhe was convinced, to her, life could not be deſirable on any terms.

Having been fatigued with company one afternoon, after their departure ſhe took a book, and ſtrolled into a little wood, ſituated in the park, at ſome diſtance from the houſe; where ſhe had not been long ſeated before her brother, who had watched her from the hall window, approached, and parting the buſhes with his hands, was wounded by a thorn as he entered.

"You ought not to complain, George," ſaid Anna, with a penſive ſmile; "it is trifling compared to the thorns of remorſe that prick and goad a bad conſcience."

"Very poſſible, Morality. But tell me," added he, ſeating himſelf, and tenderly taking her hand—"though remember, as Affection aſks the queſtion, Sincerity ſhould anſwer it—i you do not think the wound of unrequited love is much more painful than the one, and very nearly equal to the other."

Aſtoniſhed how her love for Montgomery could be known by any one but herſelf, and equally

equally surprised at this sudden interrogation, she averted her face, and replied with some degree of confusion, "That is the only passion, perhaps, to which your sister is yet a stranger."

"Anna," said Mr. Belmont, letting her hand fall, "you have wounded my vanity; for, although I am a lively fellow, I had enough to suppose that, after so many years' tried affection, you might at least have thought me worthy of your confidence."

"Indeed, George," said Anna, taking his hand, and pressing it between hers, "Heaven can witness that I have ever cultivated your esteem with the tenderest care; pulling up every weed which affection could even suppose might overrun or check its thriving; then why doubt the sincerity of mine? Indeed I may with truth declare, no sister ever loved a brother better."

"Oh hush, Anna! do not talk so seriously," replied Mr. Belmont; "I came not hither to reproach you, but to ask you if you do not love my friend Montgomery?"

"I—I

"I—I love Mr. Montgomery!" ſaid Anna, greatly confuſed, whilſt a tranſient bluſh flaſhed acroſs her pale countenance, which needed not an interpretation to convince him that his ſuppoſitions were well founded; as ſhe replied—"My heart is unconſcious of poſſeſſing any other ſentiment than eſteem for any mortal, excepting thoſe who are allied to me by the ties of proximity; and that Mr. Montgomery poſſeſſes that ſentiment in its fulleſt extent I will ingenuouſly confeſs—nay, you cannot deny that he deſerves it, ſince you are proud of acknowledging him as your friend."

"Indeed he might have deſerved much more, had he not been ſo long blind to the merits of Senſibility, whoſe ſpeaking eyes long ſince expreſſed her admiration of him, which he, not having penetration enough to conſtrue in its right ſenſe, is now juſtly ſerved by being deprived, perhaps for ever, of again witneſſing ſo choice a ſelection of virtues as I am brother to."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Anna, with a trembling earneſtneſs, whilſt a ſickly paleneſs

paleneſs ſuffuſing her face deſcribed the inward agitation of her mind—"does he then talk of leaving us?"

"He does," replied Mr. Belmont;—"but I fear you are not well?"

"Oh yes," ſaid Anna, with a deep ſigh, ſcarcely knowing what ſhe ſaid or did, "proceed, for I am as well as ever I can expect to be."

"I hope not," ſaid Mr. Belmont, affectionately, "for you are certainly very ill. But I was going to tell you that Archibald has juſt received a letter from his father, wherein he expreſſes a wiſh for his return, as Lady Montgomery is ſaid to be in danger by her phyſicians; and he has appointed his horſes to be ready at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, when he intends ſetting out for Wales."

Scarcely had he concluded before their conference was interrupted by Montgomery calling upon George Belmont. Anna inſtantly roſe with an endeavour to conceal her emotions; but overcome by a variety of painful ſenſations, ſhe fell ſenſe-

leſs. Mr. Belmont immediately raiſed her head from the ground; a cold ſweat bedewed her face, her eyes were cloſed, reſpiration had nearly ceaſed, and the ſource of life ſeemed faſt receding through every channel. Terrified at her apparent danger, he in his turn called loudly upon Montgomery, who, quickly penetrating the wood, inſtantly came to his aſſiſtance. Perceiving the lifeleſs ſituation of Anna, without aſking any queſtions, he ſnatched her up in his arms, and ran with her to a ſmall branch of the Severn, that meandered through the grounds at no very conſiderable diſtance; when laying her gently down upon the margin, he ſprinkled her face with the water. After a few ſeconds, (ere her diſperſed ſenſes were ſcarcely reunited by returning reaſon), ſhe breathed; and, in the ſofteſt accents of love, ſighed—"Oh Montgomery!" He ſtarted;—ſhe had not opened her eyes, and therefore knew not that he was near her. He folded his arms, and appeared loſt in thought, till again caſting his eyes on the lovely, intereſting, but

pale

pale countenance of Anna, and perceiving her faſt relapſing into inſenſibility, he haſtily ſprinkled her with a plentiful effuſion of water; when kneeling on the graſs by her ſide, he gently raiſed her in his arms, and ſoftly addreſſing her by her name, ſoon had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her open her eyes. Mr. Belmont coming up, and thanking Montgomery, recalled her wandering ideas; when perceiving to whom ſhe was again indebted for aſſiſtance, ſhe bluſhed, and extricating herſelf from his arms, roſe by the aid of his offered hand, trembling as ſhe accepted it; when taking her brother's arm, ſhe gracefully curtſied, and faintly uttered ſome broken thanks of gratitude to Montgomery.

They then moved ſlowly on towards the Lodge, when Montgomery, ſeeing ſhe was very weak, offered her the aſſiſtance of his arm, which ſhe thankfully accepted. He could not but reflect on the name ſhe had ſo pathetically pronounced, and now began to ſuſpect that it was he alone who was the cauſe of her illneſs. This ſuppoſition

blended ſuch a tender pity and careful attention in his converſation and manners, that ſhe flattered herſelf, though abſent from the Lodge, he might ſometimes think of its inhabitants, without forgetting Anna was amongſt the number.

Returning home, Lady Belmont, who watched her daughter's declining health with the moſt anxious tenderneſs, adviſed her to retire to reſt; but, imputing her pale countenance to fatigue, and the effects of a long walk, ſhe declined: for Montgomery had but a few more hours to ſtay with them, and thoſe few ſhe could not willingly deprive herſelf of the pleaſure of his company, though very unfit to enjoy it.

The next morning Anna roſe unuſually languid and depreſſed; for Sleep far from her pillow fled, like a falſe friend, refuſing aſſiſtance when trouble and ſorrow moſt required his aid. Her eyes had not been cloſed the whole night, for painful reflection kept her waking to anticipate the parting with Montgomery. So certain it is, however paradoxical it may ſeem, that we always

always willingly meet misfortune half way, as if afraid that the Fates had not reserved a sufficient portion of misery for our share in the womb of futurity.

Dressing herself in a plain white muslin, she descended to the breakfast-parlour, where she was surprised to find Percival and the family already assembled. Mr. Montgomery, whose attention was alive to every thing, immediately rose, and placing a chair between her brother's and his, tenderly enquired the state of her health; when replying "Indifferent," Sir Charles said—

"Indeed, my dear Anna, you must consent to have the advice of a physician; I can no longer bear to see you labouring with indisposition.

"I fear," said Mr. Belmont, gravely, "that *physical* advice would be of no service to our dear Anna."

Had not Montgomery had a clue from Anna the preceding evening, when, insensible to every thing but love, she softly breathed his name, he could never have divined Mr. Belmont's meaning; but as

he had received this clue, which enabled him, without any difficulty, to understand him, he did not find himself quite composed; and immediately rising, he told Percival he wished to speak with him, and led the way into the opposite apartment.

As he locked the door as soon as Percival entered, I must endeavour to conjecture, if possible, what the subject of this private conference could be, in order to allay the curiosity of my female readers.

It might be, perhaps, to express a wish to Percival that he would write him particular and accurate statements of Anna's health, or to relate the particulars of the antecedent evening, or to declare he would try to wean her affections from him by a long absence; or to affirm he would never marry, or to take a letter or a verbal message from Percival to his Caroline Mortimer, or it might be to obtain an absolution for his former promises and declarations. But my readers are now at liberty to select which of these suppositions they may conceive the most probable, or the nearest allied to truth,

as

as I am not at leiſure to ſtate any more; for Mr. Montgomery and Percival entering the room, the former addreſſing Sir Charles, expreſſed his regret at being compelled, by urgent neceſſity, to quit the ſociety of a family from which he had derived ſuch mental ſatisfaction. Sir Charles returned a ſuitable reply; but when in Anna's turn it came to be addreſſed, ſhe roſe trembling from her ſeat, and unable to ſupport her agitated frame, caught hold of her brother's arm. Montgomery ventured to take her hand; but what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, impreſſed on it the kiſs of pity and reſpect, hoping that if, by chance directed, they ſhould ever meet again, ſhe might be conducted by Health, who had ſo treacherouſly deſerted her. Anna curtſied, deeply ſighed, and uttered ſome unintelligible nothings, except that he could not fail to be happy if he met with the pleaſure ſhe wiſhed, and he ſo worthily deſerved.

He bowed and departed; when Anna inſtantly withdrew, and retired to her dreſſing-room, where, quickly throwing up the ſaſh, ſhe

she watched him till a winding of the road intercepted her view. No sooner convinced that she had lost sight of him, perhaps for ever, than throwing herself into a chair, reclining her head upon her hands, which were thrown in the attitude of desponding grief across the table, she burst into tears, exclaiming—

"What a wretched, persecuted being am I! what a vale of lengthened misery have I to pass through! Surrounded by blessings, love has rendered me incapable of enjoying them; for ah Montgomery! can I taste of the gilded cup of pleasure when your beloved idea fills up every excavation of my heart with pungent sorrow? No," added she, raising her head, "discernment claimed it as a sacrifice to your virtues; and though ungratefully received, your's it must unalterably remain, till the iron hand of Death shall pulverize it into dust, and fleeting Time incorporate it with its native clay."

"Oh talk not of dying, my love!" said Lady Belmont, entering the room—"encourage not such melancholy reflections, my

Anna,

Anna, to wound the fond heart of your mother with compunction, for having unintentionally invited the deſerving, but inſenſate Montgomery to wound her daughter's heart with diſregarded love. Tell me, my dear Anna, if that is not the ground-work of your complaint?"

"Oh my dear Madam," ſaid Anna, taking the hand of Lady Belmont, and preſſing it to her aching heart, "upbraid me not with a breach of confidence in not having before confided you with a ſecret, neither reproach me for my folly in permitting Mr. Montgomery to engroſs the greater part of my thoughts; but in your maternal boſom let me now repoſe my ſorrows, and by participation lighten them; for ever ſince united pity and eſteem firſt taught my heart to love, it has been debarred of a moment's peace or happineſs."

"Alas!" ſaid Lady Belmont, "I fear, my dear Anna, your ſituation is as George repreſented it—hopeleſs; for I am very much afraid that Mr. Montgomery will never experience a reciprocal affection. Then endeavour, my dear girl, to baniſh

him

him from your remembrance, that your parents may not have to regret the loſs of their daughter's happineſs."

"This unmerited kindneſs overwhelms me, my dear Madam," replied Anna, ſighing; "ſince, inſtead of ſuch affectionate tenderneſs, I deſerve reprehenſion for having ſo unguardedly cheriſhed a paſſion which, by undermining my conſtitution, conſequently wounds the feelings of my too indulgent parents. But the taſk you have pointed out to me to perform, however hard, ſhall be attempted; though I am certain, I feel convinced, that to forget the ſingular virtues of Mr. Montgomery, is the only injunction you could lay upon me that I ſhould obey with unwillingneſs, and the moſt difficult to accompliſh."

"Talk not of difficulties, my Anna," ſaid Lady Belmont riſing; "a little perſeverance and fortitude will ſoon obviate them. Then take thoſe virtues for your guide, and let your family again ſee you bleſſed in the full enjoyment of health and cheerfulneſs."

"I

"I will endeavour, Madam," ſaid Anna, "to fix my ideas and inclinations where you wiſh them placed; but pray indulge me ſo far as to let the ſubject of this converſation be kept an inviolable ſecret even from Sir Charles."

Lady Belmont aſſured her, as it was her requeſt, ſhe would preſerve it inviolate, and withdrew; when Anna ſunk into deep meditation on the paſt converſation, till ſome intruding ideas paſſing acroſs her imagination, ſhe heaved an involuntary ſigh, expreſſive of the anguiſh of her mind;—but ſuddenly recollecting that this was not the method ſhe muſt purſue to forget him, ſhe haſtily roſe from her ſeat, and endeavoured to diſmiſs him from her thoughts, by retiring to dreſs for dinner, which ſhe ſoon accompliſhed; and aſſuming a feigned appearance of cheerfulneſs, ſhe deſcended to the dining-room. But to return to Montgomery.

He had no ſooner loſt ſight of Belmont and its vicinity, than he checked the ſwift

progreſs

progreſs of his horſe, that he might have leiſure to reflect on his ſituation. The change he could not conſider deſirable, ſince he was quitting the elegant ſociety of a family he highly eſteemed, whoſe conjugal felicity, virtues, and domeſtic happineſs rendered them an example worthy of imitation,—to enter the doors of a manſion where Diſcord once reigned, but now made ſtill more diſmal by the dark prevailing gloom of ſickneſs;—beſides, he was ungenerouſly leaving Anna, moſt likely for ever, to pine alone, by him unheard and unpitied, as he perſiſted in his reſolution of procuring a commiſſion in the Army if Lady Montgomery recovered.

As his heart was ſwayed by goodneſs and humanity, the idea that he was the cauſe of Anna's ſufferings could not but injure his feelings, and he ſometimes thought it was his duty to remunerate her miſeries on his account by the offer of his hand and fortune;—but then the ſcenes of complicated ſorrows his father had entailed upon himſelf by his imprudent marriage, officiouſly

ouſly preſented themſelves to his imagination; and he again determined not to encourage the idea.

In this reſolution he arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon (as the diſtance did not exceed twenty-five miles) at his paternal ſeat; when enquiring for Sir Hugh and his ſiſter Emmeline he learned they were at dinner. Diſmounting, he delivered his horſe to the care of the ſervants; when, entering the hall, he opened a door on the right hand ſide, and diſcovered his father, ſiſter, and an unknown young lady habited in very deep mourning, ſitting at the table.

Sir Hugh heard the door open, but ſuppoſing it was one of the ſervants, did not look up; till Emmeline haſtily riſing from table, and embracing Montgomery, exclaimed—

"Good Heavens! Archibald, is it you? Who, in the name of patience and fortitude, ſhould expect to ſee you at the Hall?"

At the name of Archibald, the knife and fork of Sir Hugh fell from his hands; when jumping (rather than riſing) from his chair, he

he haſtened to Montgomery, and eagerly ſhaking his hand, in ecſtacy exclaimed—"My dear boy, how are you? I have not been ſo happy ſince you've been away as I am now. But are you not ſorry, Archy to return to the Hall?"

"I truſt I ſhall always be happy to ſee you, my dear Sir," ſaid Montgomery, preſſing his hand. "But how is Lady Montgomery?"

At theſe words Sir Hugh uttered a "Piſh!" but it did not proceed from ill-nature; for the name of Lady Montgomery was like ſtriking one particular key on the harpſichord, which conſtantly produces the ſame ſound, as Sir Hugh never heard it without accompanying it with this ſingle interjection. It has been before obſerved that he was a very good ſort of a man, though he had his oddities; for now, inſtead of anſwering Montgomery, he turned upon his heel, and coolly walked to his ſeat.

Emmeline, ſeeing her father did not intend making a reply, informed her brother that the diſorder had taken a favourable

turn

turn the laſt night when at its criſis, and that the phyſician flattered her with a ſpeedy re-eſtabliſhment of her health.

He was then introduced to Miſs Euphraſia Howard, the friend of Emmeline, and the ward of Mr. Mortimer; when compliments being over, he ſat down to partake of the dinner.

Mr. Montgomery enquiring of his ſiſter after her friend Caroline Mortimer, ſhe replied—

"Oh ſhe is very well. I ſuppoſe you are not ignorant that I have promiſed very ſhortly to attend her to the altar of Hymen in the character of a bride-maid, where ſhe intends to reſign her liberty into the hands of ſuch a horrid, ſentimental creature, that he will never deprive her of it."

"She is too ſubmiſſive to need reſtraint, too affectionate to require any ſuperfluous liberty, and too fearful of offending ever to need reproof," ſaid Miſs Howard; "and your horrid, ſentimental creature, Emmeline," added ſhe, ſmiling, "will not abuſe his power, if I am any judge of phyſiognomy."

"Your

"Your opinion of merit cannot poſſibly be erroneous. Miſs Howard," ſaid Montgomery, "if Percival Edwin is the model by which you form your judgment; for, with the worthieſt of men, he is indeed the moſt worthy."

"Come, come, Archy," ſaid Sir Hugh, "fill up the ladies' glaſſes. A ſpeedy termination to the war!"

"With all my heart, Sir," replied Montgomery; "and may my ſword be conſpicuouſly diſplayed in the cauſe of my King and country! for I intend its power ſhall ſoon be tried; then if it ever wilfully fails me, may my arm be withered up, and rendered incapable of wielding another even in ſelf-defence!"

Sir Hugh looked ſulky; and without making any reply, took up the clean pipe he had ordered, and haſtily ſnapping it in pieces, threw it acroſs the table into the fire-place; whilſt Emmeline, anxious to change the ſubject, entreated him to inform her whom the company conſiſted of that he had ſpent his time with.

"I will

"I will do even that to oblige you," said Montgomery, smiling. "There was your friend's Clergyman, who took pains to convince his humble flock, by his own example, that the excellent precepts he conveyed to them from the pulpit were not impracticable; for he never once deviated from the paths of moral virtue they prescribed; then there was the Honourable Captain Macartney; Mr. Mordaunt, a very facetious Counsellor, and a man of the greatest integrity; and your friends Sir William and Mr. Douglas."

Sir Charles Belmont was next mentioned; but he was interrupted by Miss Howard, who asked him if he were intimate with the Belmont family.

"I am proud of acknowledging the honour of being ranked amongst the number of their friends," replied Montgomery.

Here Emmeline requested him to give her the traits of the several branches of the family.

"Sir Charles, my dear Emmeline," he replied, "is the perfect philanthropist; pleasant, social, cheerful, and serene; whose

greatest

greateſt ſum of happineſs is his family. In him the unfortunate ever find an active, aſſiſting friend, innocence a protector, and merit a patron; poverty and indolence are ſtrangers amongſt his tenants, which make him univerſally reſpected and eſteemed."

The company ſeemed greatly pleaſed with the deſcription. Montgomery continued, ſaying, "Lady Belmont's excellent underſtanding, poliſhed manners, refined converſation, and polite attention to her friends, are equalled by her expanded heart, the ſeat of conjugal and maternal affection."

"A matchleſs paragon of female excellence," ſaid Emmeline; an illuſive, imaginary phantom, created by your fantaſtical notions of what woman ought to be."

"Then unleſs you will think the fame of George Belmont," added Montgomery, laughing, "you muſt ſecure your hearts; for he is a lively, ſenſible, comic, good-tempered, handſome fellow, who poſſeſſes every virtue in perfection, and who never fails to ſteal the affections of the ladies.—But I wiſh

I wiſh all women were as amiable as his ſiſter Anna," continued he, ſmiling; "for if I may believe the evidence of my ſenſes, ſhe exactly correſponds with the idea I have formed of what a woman ought to be."

"Oh Archibald," ſaid Emmeline, with an arch look, "I thought you would never have ſtaid ſo long at Belmont without ſome powerful attraction had enſlaved your ſenſes; though I am very happy to find that this beautiful magnet has been able to draw away part of your falſe-grounded notions of the ſex. But come," addreſſing Miſs Howard, "let us retire, Euphraſia; for vanity will not ſuffer me to be preſent merely to liſten to the praiſes of one more accompliſhed than myſelf."

He was ſorry to ſee them withdraw; but Sir Hugh paſſing the bottle, and engaging him in converſation, I muſt for a ſhort time quit their ſociety, to certify who Miſs Howard was.

She was near nineteen; her figure tall and graceful, her temper mild and engaging, and her character naturally ſprightly; though at preſent it was ſhaded by a penſive gravity for

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the recent loſs of a fond, indulgent parent, whoſe death had left her an orphan with five thouſand pounds. He had formerly married the ſiſter of Mr. Mortimer, and a ſhort time before his deceaſe, had nominated him his daughter's guardian till ſhe became of age; her mother having died whilſt introducing her to the world.

Thus far I deem neceſſary for my readers to be acquainted with; but to know what ſhe may be, we muſt wait till the hand of Time unrolls the myſtic pages of the book of Fate.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.